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Often feel fatigued? Try **magnesium**

Feeling tired and don't know why? You're not alone. According to a recent study, less than half of us consume our recommended daily amount of magnesium, a mineral that helps turn the food we eat into energy.

Best known for helping to reduce tiredness and fatigue, magnesium is also vital for our health.

Deficiency can cause mood swings, migraines, eye twitches and muscle cramps.

If you have low magnesium levels, you are also less likely to get a good night's sleep.

Magnesium is present in foods such as black beans, bananas and pumpkin seeds, but to get the benefits we need to absorb it into our bodies.

One way to ensure we consume a consistent level of magnesium is by taking a daily supplement – but not all supplements are equal.

Your body's ability to absorb the magnesium depends on the way that the supplement is made.

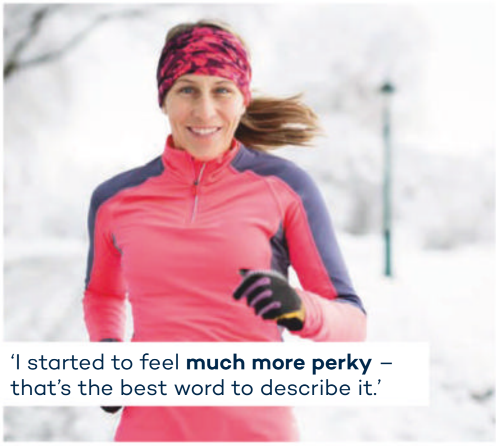
'Most supplements use magnesium oxide – it is the most common form, as it has a high concentration of magnesium but it's not easily released into the body,' explains Dr Miriam Ferrer PhD, head of product development at FutureYou Cambridge.

'Taking more magnesium to try and make up for the problem isn't the best approach, as too much can cause an upset stomach so we created Magnesium+ using magnesium lactate which is twice as absorbable as a standard magnesium oxide supplement. This means you need much less per capsule to deliver the same amount, making it a much more efficient way to take this essential mineral.'

Reviews gathered on independent website Trustpilot speak of its effectiveness. 'It gives your body a magnesium boost without upsetting your digestive system,' writes Robert.

And Nicole, 57, says: 'I genuinely started to feel different within a couple of weeks. I started to feel much more perky – that's the best word to describe it.

'I feel like I've got more energy and more desire to do stuff. I've taken them religiously ever since.'



'I started to feel **much more perky** – that's the best word to describe it.'

Free MAGNESIUM for the over 40s

Leading Cambridge company to offer scientifically proven energy range supplements for free.

*Just pay £1.50 postage

FutureYou
CAMBRIDGE
Magnesium+

FutureYou Cambridge, a nutraceutical company known for its well-researched nutritional supplements, is giving away packs of its flagship energy product to new customers.

The offer is aimed at helping the over 40s, who commonly suffer with low energy and fatigue, but is open to people of all ages. It comes after the Cambridge firm received a flurry of positive reviews for its best-selling energy product on Trustpilot, the independent online review platform.

'I am a woman of 74, and a few months ago I realised that I had no energy at all. I put it down to my age, but it was really impacting on my life in so many ways. My husband read an ad for Magnesium+ and I thought I would give it a try. Within two weeks I was a different woman, with energy to spare,' says Anne.

"Within two weeks I was a different woman, with energy to spare"

Adam Cleevely, FutureYou Cambridge's CEO, explains the thinking behind the offer: 'After receiving so much positive feedback on Magnesium+, our team is confident that people will love it within their first pack.

'So we've decided to offer that first pack for free, because our team is excited to spread the word about Magnesium+ with as many people as possible – as excited as our customers, who have been leaving such amazing reviews.'

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR FREE PACK

To claim your free 28 day Magnesium+ subscription trial pack worth £11.50, visit **FutureYouOffers.co.uk** or freephone **0800 808 5740** quoting code

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Your first box is free (just pay £1.50 postage) and you will be enrolled into a flexible subscription costing £11.50 every 28 days, which you can cancel at any time, without obligation.

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***Magnesium contributes to: a reduction of tiredness and fatigue, a normal energy-yielding metabolism, normal functioning of the nervous system, normal muscle function and normal psychological function**. Introductory offer valid for new UK customers only. Offer expires 31st March 2023. See FutureYouHealth.com/MGF916 for full terms and conditions.

WELCOME!

This may be the February issue, but it'll land on supermarket shelves (and pop through subscribers' doors) mid-January – right around the time of what many call "Blue Monday". For a good few years now, the third Monday in January has been dubbed rather gloomily by experts (and, to be fair, mostly PR people needing something to talk about!) as the most depressing day of the year. It's dark, it's cold, the festivities of Christmas and the new year are over. It's also a time when the lack of daylight can lead to some suffering from seasonal affective disorder, more commonly known by the rather apt abbreviation SAD. We're taking a look in our immunity special section at SAD (page 48), and ways to help combat it – the lack of light and, therefore, vitamin D definitely has a knock-on effect on your immunity, so getting outside as much as you can, even if it's cloudy, can really make a difference to your mood and health in general.

Cannabis and CBD writer Ruby Deevoy takes an interesting look at how extracts of the cannabis plant are being investigated for their immune health benefits (page 46), but if delving into the world of CBD and/or cannabis extracts feels too alien, find out how five of the most common garden herbs can give your immune system a helping hand at this time of year – and any time for that matter (page 52)!

February is also associated with love, thanks to Valentine's Day, so you'll find a bit of a heart-related theme throughout the issue, including a look at three simple ways you can improve your heart health (p30). Skincare-wise, winter is always tough thanks to the bitingly cold, dry air, so we're looking at how to keep skin moisturised (page 72). And if you want to kick-start a healthy eating plan, maybe give fasting a go – Keto expert Pauline Cox explains how and why (page 86). Enjoy the issue!

Katy Sunnassee x

instagram.com/thehealtheditor

Check out my new column on perimenopause – see page 98!

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Save £21!
See p40

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MY LIFE IN HEALTH
'I NO LONGER RECOGNISED MYSELF'

Former *Strictly* star Ola Jordan opened up about her weight loss for this issue's interview (page 14).

KATY CURATES...

I've curated a selection of my fave ways to unwind and relax for Valentine's Day (page 12).

IMAGE OF KATY: GEORGINA LITTLE PHOTOGRAPHY.

THE *TOP SANTÉ* MANIFESTO

We believe every woman has the ability to maximise her health and beauty at any age, regardless of health history. With a balanced diet, effective exercise and a positive mindset, you can stay younger for longer, inside and out. We'll bring you the latest information on wellbeing, fitness, food and beauty, empowering you to make informed choices now and for your future health. What's gone before can't be undone or redone, so let's leave it in the past and focus on what can be changed today! We're here to help you, one small step at a time.

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.

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GRAB JANUARY

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Light
Smooth Toffee

BY THE SPOON

FIND YOUR FLAVOUR TODAY

FEBRUARY 2023

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID VENNI.

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***Nielsen** **GB ScanTrack** UK Total Coverage Value & Unit Retail Sales 52 w/e 8/10/22. To verify contact Vitabiotics Ltd, 1 Apsley Way, London, NW2 7HF. **1.** Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation for the normal function of bone and cartilage.

2022-11-08_ADJONGELCONP_E_2

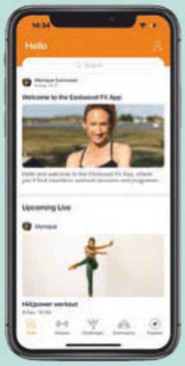
YOUR HEALTHY FEBRUARY

New studies, books, apps and more to help you stay well in mind and body.

HEALTHY HABITS ARE CONTAGIOUS

We all know how hard it is to resist a birthday cake that's doing the rounds in the office but, happily, the opposite is also true. German research has found employees are more likely to eat fruit and vegetables when their colleagues encourage a healthy lifestyle. So, it's definitely worth booking a working lunch with that co-worker who's always munching carrot sticks and makes their own juice!

WORDS: LIZZY DENING. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.


Hello
Welcome to the Eastwood Fit App
Upcoming Live
HIITpower workout

APPY AND YOU KNOW IT

Fancy getting a fitness leg-up from a Hollywood trainer? Monique Eastwood, who has trained the likes of Emily Blunt and Sam Rockwell, has launched **Eastwood Fit** (free trial, then £25 per month, eastwoodfit.com) to give you dance-inspired workouts, stretch sessions and challenges designed to help you create a strong and lean physique.

LOWER YOUR HIP FRACTURE RISK

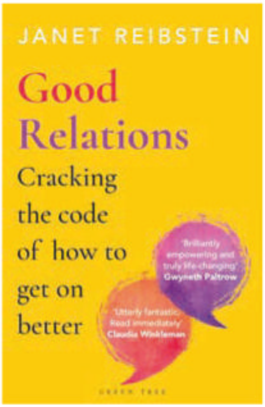
An additional 25g of daily protein has been shown to create an average of 14 per cent reduction in the risk of hip fracture. The benefits were even greater in women who were under weight, with a risk reduction of a whopping 45 per cent. The extra protein can come in any form, including meat, dairy, eggs, beans, nuts and legumes, according to the research by the University of Leeds. You can get 25g of protein from a piece of salmon, a steak or two eggs.

KEEP IT GREEN

We've long known the many benefits of following a Mediterranean-style diet. However, making a slight adjustment can help you burn visceral fat at four-times the rate of other diets. The Green Mediterranean Diet includes the usual pulses, wholegrains, nuts, fish and olive oils but puts an extra emphasis on leafy greens, as well as drinking three-to-four cups of green tea per day. Participants in the study, published in *BMC Medicine*, followed the diet for 18 months and dropped an impressive 14 per cent of visceral fat (this wraps around organs and triggers inflammation) on average, compared to 4.5 per cent for those following a standard healthy diet.

NEW READ

***Good Relations: Cracking the Code of How to Get on Better*, by Janet Reibstein (£18.99, Bloomsbury Green Tree).** While you might think being a "people person" is an inherent trait, psychologist Janet Reibstein says creating good relationships is a skill you can learn. Her new book reveals the secrets to effective communication and building long-lasting relationships. Give it a read to discover how productive relationships impact your health, wellbeing, financial security and happiness.


JANET REIBSTEIN
Good Relations
Cracking the code of how to get on better
'Brilliantly empowering and truly life-changing' Gwyneth Paltrow
'Utterly fantastic. Read immediately' Claudia Winkleman
GREEN TREE

TOP OF THE PODS

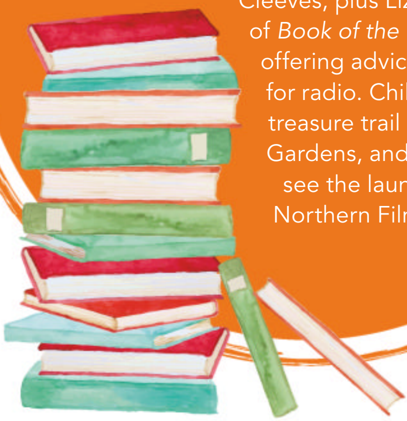
For a dreamy moment, try out *GABA* (gaba.life), a podcast of guided meditations. Each session follows a different theme, blending a mixture of poetry, soundscapes and occasional media clips to create an otherworldly experience.

POP THE KETTLE ON...

In happy news for a nation that loves a good cuppa, tea helps you remain healthier as you age. In a new study of more than 800 elderly women, scientists from Edith Cowan University, Western Australia, found women were far less likely to have a build-up of abdominal aortic calcification – a predictor of cardiovascular risk, such as heart attack and stroke – if they consumed a high level of flavonoids, including those found in black and green tea. Non-tea drinkers can also benefit from flavonoids via other common foods including apples, nuts, citrus fruit and berries.

POWER OF STORYTELLING

Lose yourself in a story at the Alnwick Story Fest in Northumberland this month (alnwickstoryfest.com) Taking place from February 24-26, it will celebrate the life-changing power of fiction, and include appearances by crime writer Ann Cleeves, plus Liz Allard, producer of *Book of the Week* on Radio 4, offering advice on how to write for radio. Children can enjoy a treasure trail around Alnwick Gardens, and the event will see the launch of the Northern Film Prize.



TOP Santé

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KATY CURATES…

Katy Sunnassee rounds up her favourite finds for February – the month of love! Connect with her at instagram.com/thehealtheditor.

Boody Lyolyte Ribbed Hi Leg Brief and Low Back Bra (£12.95 and £19.95, boody.co.uk). These new undies from one of my fave brands are made with sustainable Lyocell – a cellulose fibre traditionally made from eucalyptus or oak and birch. These ones use Boody's signature organically grown bamboo, making them super soft. Team with the outfit on the right for ultimate comfort!

Flo & Sang Brights Collection in Hot Pink (from £30, floandsang.com). My work-from-home wardrobe consists of these joggers and sweatshirt in light grey, dark grey… and now this gorgeous new shade of pink! Designed, hand washed and dyed in the UK, the loungewear washes well and is super slouchy, comfy and flattering for every age, in my opinion – who said tracksuits were just for teens?!

Wassen Mineralise Relax + Unwind (£11.99 for 14 sachets, boots.com). Wind down and get into a relaxed mood for date night – or a solo pamper night – by popping the contents of one of these into your water. The black cherry-flavoured powder contains relaxing chamomile, lemon balm and magnesium, as well as iodine and copper to help calm your nervous system.

Wassen
RELAX+ UNWIND

P
M
PIERRE MARCOLINI
BRUSSELS

Pierre Marcolini Cœur à Cœur Collection Heart Box (£16.90, marcolini.co.uk). A taste of luxury from top Belgian chocolatier Pierre Marcolini – this is the perfect treat for yourself or for a loved one. The cute tin contains nine luscious chocs in tastebud-tingling flavours including yuzu, tangerine, Madagascan vanilla, Timut pepper, nougat and caramel. J'adore!

Sarah Haran Marigold Weekender Bag (£350, sarahharan.com). This super-stylish travel bag has ample storage for everything you need – plus an extra bag inside for laundry/smalls. The inner pockets help you pack easily, and the sleek exterior made from water-repellent canvas with leather handles and trim looks so chic. And, with an elasticated water bottle holder, it also makes the ideal gym bag!

WORDS: KATY SUNNASSEE.

3 ways to relax this Valentine's Day (and night!)

BetterYou Mind, Relax and Revive Magnesium Bath Flakes (£8.45, betteryou.com). Treat yourself to a long bath (maybe for two?) with a handful of these relaxing magnesium salts scented with essential oils – choose from sweet orange and basil, rose geranium and bergamot, or grapefruit and eucalyptus. The perfect wind-down.

BetterYou
Magnesium Relax
BetterYou
Magnesium Mind
BetterYou
Magnesium Revive

Sienna X The Massage Candle (from £8.95, shop.sienna-x.co.uk). Get into the mood with this sensorial candle that, once lit, transforms into a nourishing massage oil to warm and hydrate your skin. Let the scent of geranium, sandalwood and lavender essential oils uplift your senses – just allow the wax to cool a little before pouring. Another good one for date night!

THE MASSAGE CANDLE
sienna X
sienna X
THE MASSAGE CANDLE

JOMO London CBD Arousal Oil (from £48, jomolondon.com). With a blend of 100 per cent plant-based oils and extracts including lavender, black pepper, jojoba, ylang ylang and CBD, this new-gen lubricant helps increase sensitivity and blood flow. It's also good to ease tense shoulders.

MY LIFE IN HEALTH

‘I NO LONGER RECOGNISED MYSELF’

Former *Strictly Come Dancing* dancer Ola Jordan opens up about rediscovering her body confidence from losing three and a half stones and how it’s also improved her sex life!

The picture Ola posted on Instagram of herself and James, which instigated their fitness transformation.

I’ve been a dancer since I was seven and dancing professionally since age 17. Dancing and fitness were my life but after leaving *Strictly*, a show that required sometimes 10 hours of training daily to get our celebrity partners show-ready, James and I didn’t need to rehearse even half as much in preparation for our couples’ shows. Over time, my fitness reduced and during my pregnancy I didn’t exercise because after having IVF, I didn’t want to risk putting myself under strain. Last summer, I was at a soft play centre with my daughter Ella, struggling to keep up with her and thinking: “I don’t want to be here because I find it so hard”.

The UK went into lockdown three weeks after Ella was born and, like for many people, food became a comfort. A year later, we were grieving the loss of James’s dad, Allan, who passed away in March 2021 after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. We would sit on the sofa every night watching a movie eating crisps and tucking into a sharing bag of Minstrels. I couldn’t help myself and, because we had also let our exercise regime slip – something so many new parents will relate to – my weight crept up.

Last summer, we went to a barbecue and a friend mistakenly thought I was pregnant again. He said: “I’m going to pour you a little glass of Champagne, just to pretend that you’re drinking. I won’t tell anyone”. I couldn’t believe it!

Then one sunny afternoon, James and I were messing about by our pool and a friend took pictures of us. Seeing us side by side looking so out of shape, overweight and unhealthy (James had also gained three stones and hit 15st 6lb) was a

WORDS: GEMMA CALVERT. IMAGES: DAVID VENNI.

shock. I decided to post the picture to social media to give myself a wake-up call. It was hard pressing that button to post it to the world, but something in me told me I wanted to as it would spur me into action as I no longer recognised myself.

Once I began on my health journey, I lost 1st 9lb within the first month. James and I committed to cutting down on all the bad stuff. I'm not saying we don't eat chocolate and crisps now and then, but it's now very much in moderation.

We also began working out at home, doing what we know best, dancing, which was lovely because we introduced Ella to those workouts. The three of us would be cha-cha-ing around the house and slowly – by combining the dancing with squats, lunges and planks, as well as following a 1,500-calorie-a-day eating plan – the weight started coming off. It was so refreshing to be doing something positive, and it's been brilliant creating our online programme Dance Shred so others can reap the benefits, too.

We had IVF to conceive. I've heard that because of all the hormones during the process, some women put on more weight than normal. I don't know how much of that is true, but I was nearly 15st two days before giving birth to our daughter Ella in February 2020 – that was 7st heavier than when I left *Strictly* in 2015.

When I got pregnant, I wanted to enjoy the process. After all those years of trying to conceive and all the years of watching what I ate and exercising, I didn't want to think about restriction, and it was lovely not to think about whether I had another round of toast.

I've now lost 3st 6lb and it's reignited my sex life, too! I've been with James for 23 years but at the peak of my weight gain, I became shy around him when I was naked. I didn't want to get undressed in front of him. Now, I'm not shy to get undressed and I'm putting back on

> 'The three of us would be cha-cha-ing around the house and slowly – by combining the dancing with squats, lunges and planks – the weight fell off.'

> ‘It’s been brilliant creating our online programme Dance Shred so others can reap the benefits, too.’

FROM THEN TO NOW

What Ola and James ate before they got into shape and what they eat now.

BEFORE

Breakfast: Two slices of toast and butter.
Mid-morning snack: Tea and two chocolate biscuits.
Lunch: Fish and chips.
Dinner: Chicken curry with rice and poppadoms.
Evening snack: 2-3 glasses of wine, plus Minstrels.

AFTER

Breakfast: Avocado on toast.
Mid-morning snack: Skinny hot chocolate.
Lunch: Tuna mayonnaise and sweetcorn sandwich.
Dinner: Fish pie.
Evening snacks: 1 glass of wine and small bag of crisps.

my sexy underwear, which I'd abandoned for so long.

I also wanted to lose weight to look after my health long term. I want to live as long as I can for my baby – anyone with kids will understand that. When I used to go out partying and drinking, I'd never think twice about the impact all the excess was having on my long-term health but now I do. Nowadays, so many people are falling ill with diseases such as cancer, it's terrifying. Ten years ago, at age 62, my mum [Janina Grabowska, 72] had a heart attack, so I don't want to put myself at risk of going through the same thing. I want to keep my heart healthy.

I don't believe in being vegan or vegetarian. I believe we need meat. I follow a lot of doctors on Instagram who promote meat eating. I know a lot of people won't agree with me, but I cannot imagine not eating meat

and eggs; they're a big staple in my diet. A lot of people swear by the keto diet and not eating carbs, but I eat everything and believe I need every source of nutrition. It's so important to listen to your body and know your body.

Because I have a full, balanced diet, I don't feel the need for food supplements. I'm not a nutritionist or a dietician but I feel I get enough nutrients from having a really good, balanced diet.

I developed bad hormonal acne at 22, which lasted until I was 30. One year on *Strictly*, the night before a red-carpet event, I came out in boils all over my face. I rang James, saying, "How am I going to go out tomorrow on a red carpet when my face is red with boils". The acne was hormonal and I eventually took medication to clear it up. From then on, I became fastidious about looking after my skin. I know the products that work for me and I swear by Sensibio H2O micellar water. Then I use a La Roche-Posay moisturiser. I never go to bed with make-up on either.

I've had a bit of Botox in the past. Being in the public eye brings a pressure to look a certain way, I feel. I also think about my teeth – it feels as if everyone nowadays has veneers, and I don't. My teeth are not the greatest. I don't want to look like everyone else, but I would like to have a better smile.

I will try to have another baby, that's for sure. Knowing what I've been through and what I've done, if I'm lucky enough to fall pregnant again, I'm going to be much more mindful about what I'm eating and I will do exercise. I won't make the same mistake twice by sitting down all the time and eating, eating, eating!

● *James and Ola's Dance Shred workout plan (£49.99, danceshred.co.uk) is now live! You can also follow Ola at instagram.com/olajordan.*

Healthy HOME

Spruce up your home and give the Earth a helping hand with our pick of the latest eco-friendly buys.

FEED THE BIRDS

Did you know, winter and early spring are the most crucial times to put food out for the birds? This is due to a sharp decline in natural food sources over the colder months. Help our flying friends with **Henry Bell Bird Care** (from £6.99, henrybell.co.uk). Available in more than 400 garden centres nationwide, the range includes a wide variety of high-quality bird feeders, nest boxes and wild bird food, all created with the primary aim of keeping the UK's birds happy and healthy.

BiOCERA
Anti-Oxidant Alkaline Water

SPRUCE UP YOUR WATER

Water For Health Biocera Water Filter Jug (£59.75, water-for-health.co.uk) provides a simple, cost-effective way of creating alkaline, antioxidant and hydrogen-rich water, believed to offer a wide range of health benefits. The BPA-free jug removes chlorine, heavy metals and dissolved organic residues, while also raising the pH, stimulating the release of active molecular hydrogen and naturally improving the structure of the water.

CHANGE UP YOUR LOOK

Bobbi Beck Luxury Wallpaper Collection (from £26 per square metre, bobbibeck.co.uk) features a huge variety of unique designs to dress up your walls. Whether you're looking for bold and bright patterns, soft and soothing murals or three-dimensional illusion walls, you're sure to find one you love. Each wallpaper is made and printed using paper from certified sustainable forests, and non-toxic, water-based inks.

MEDITATION STATION

Treat yourself or a loved one to the **Aysha Bell Home Cleansing Wind Down Meditation Gift Box** (£58, ayshabell.com), all you need to cleanse the energy in your home and create a calming environment. You'll receive inspiring affirmation cards, a smudging stick, a lavender and geranium candle, crystals, relaxing tea and a memory stick with downloadable guided meditations.

10 BILLION

...that's how many hangers are produced every year with only 12 per cent being recycled or reused – the majority ending up in landfill.*

GIVE PLASTIC WASTE A SECOND LIFE

Marigold Let It Shine On and On! Microfibre Cloths (£3.25 for 3-pack, sainsburys.co.uk) are made from 100 per cent recycled materials, with one cloth containing the equivalent of approximately one plastic bottle. Thick, strong and super absorbent, the microfibre surface effortlessly removes household dirt, grease and dust with ease, without the need for chemicals – just add water!

CREATE A GREENER WARDROBE

Hangers are probably the last thing you'd think of when building a more sustainable home, but they often end up in landfill. **Grohanger** (£19.99 for an 18-piece set, grohanger.com) is an extendable hanger that fits any garment. Rather than throwing out smaller hangers as your children grow, use these space-saving solutions that grow with your family – from newborn all the way to adult size! Plus, they are made using recycled materials.

grohanger
BABY TO ADULT
18

WORDS: LILY SMITH. *STAT FROM GROHANGER.

Wellness TRAVEL

YOUR ROMANTIC GETAWAY

Get ready for some quality you-and-me-time with our pick of the best romantic spa breaks and retreats in the UK – perfect for Valentine's Day.

Extend "date night"

WHAT: **You and Me Time Spa Break at Feversham Arms Hotel & Verbena Spa.**
WHERE: **Helmsley, North Yorkshire.**
PRICE: **From £434 for two people.**
WEBSITE: **fevershamarmshotel.com.**

Who says date night has to be just one night? This couples' spa break at the Feversham Arms Hotel & Verbana Spa, located in the picturesque town of Helmsley, includes a romantic three-course evening meal, an overnight stay in a cosy room of your choice, plus a hearty Yorkshire breakfast the following morning.

Throughout your stay, you'll also be able to enjoy full use of the spa facilities, which include an aromatherapy room, steam room, monsoon shower and foot spas, along with the newly refurbished Mediterranean-style pool and poolside suites. Then, get ready to unwind further with a blissful hour-long treatment, choosing from a range of massages, facials, body exfoliations and more.

WORDS: LILY SMITH.

For editorial director Katy Sunnassee's full review, head to topsante.co.uk.

A bath for two – high in the sky!

WHAT: **The Windmill Suffolk.**
WHERE: **Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.**
PRICE: **From £950 for a two-night break.**
WEBSITE: **thewindmillsuffolk.com.**

With a fully decked out kitchen, cosy bedrooms, a private garden and a bath big enough for two people (wink, wink), this unique, self-catering holiday destination offers everything you need for a relaxing, romantic and awe-inspiring getaway. Converted from an old windmill, which was originally built in 1861, this adult-only retreat is spread out over four spacious floors, with stunning panoramic views of the Suffolk countryside from the top living area.

Ramp up the romance even further by pre-booking an add-on package, such as the 'Love is in the Air' bundle, where the accommodation will be kitted out with romantic balloons, red roses, a complimentary welcome hamper and more before you arrive – the perfect Valentine's Day surprise for your special someone!

Disconnect to reconnect

WHAT: Unplugged 3-Night Digital Detox Retreats.
WHERE: Various locations in the UK.
PRICE: From £390 per cabin.
WEBSITE: unplugged.rest.

Lots of couples fall into the habit of mindlessly scrolling on their phones while sat next to each other. If this sounds familiar, it might be time to switch off your devices and reconnect on a tech-free, off-the-grid retreat. Unplugged is the first travel opportunity of its kind, offering a three-night digital detox retreat at a choice of 10 cabins across the UK – with further cabins due to open soon – all situated in rural locations set deep within nature.

On arrival, guests lock their mobiles and devices in a lockbox, in exchange for an old-school Nokia, a map and an instant camera with film. Then, you'll be left to your own devices (pun intended!) for 72 hours to recharge in nature and enjoy one another's company, without the distractions of modern technology and busy schedules. The solar-powered and eco-friendly cabins have no WiFi but are equipped with books, games and a kitchen, offering the perfect chance to spend uninterrupted, quality time with your partner.

Discover private pampering

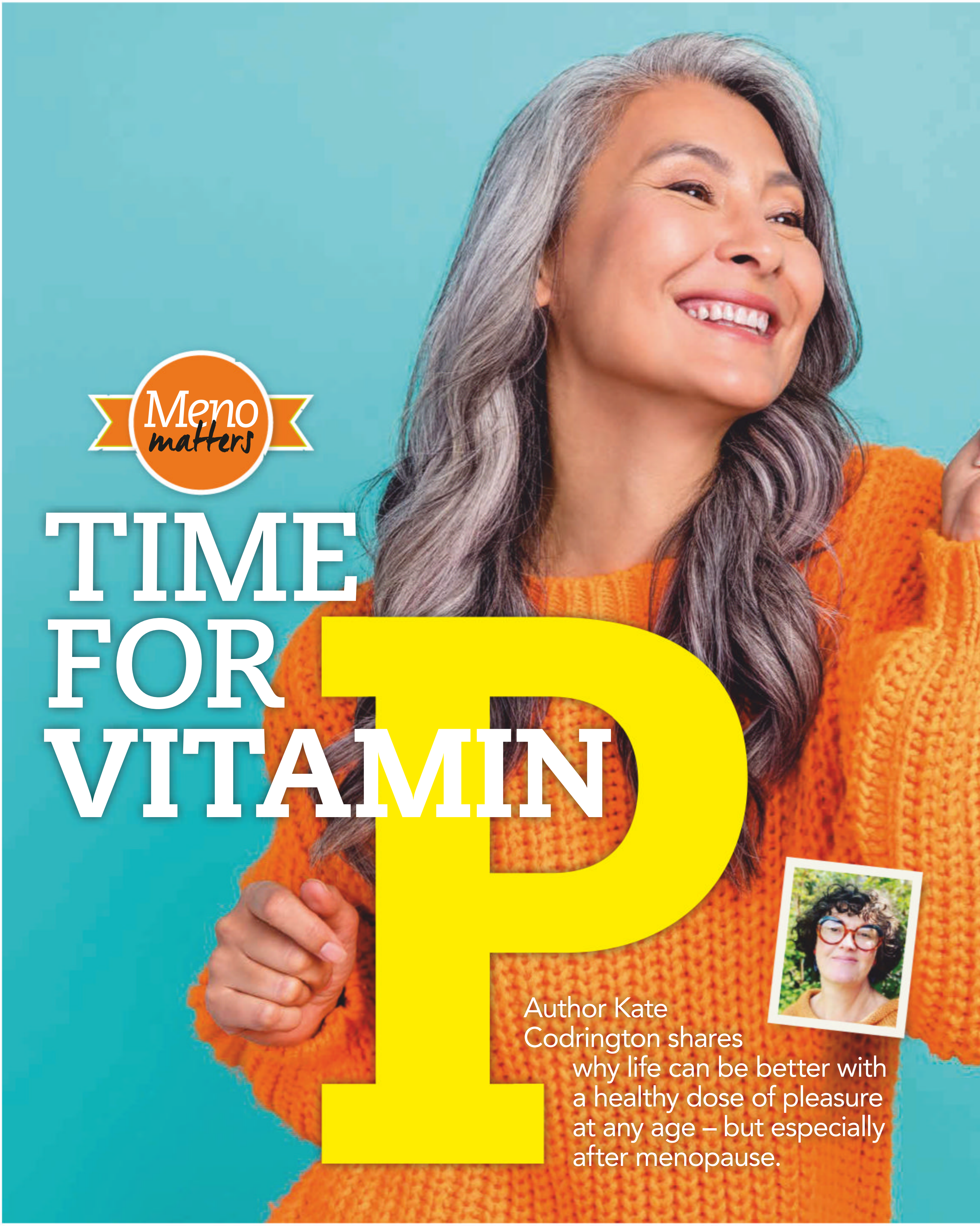
WHAT: **The Hideaway at Breedon Priory Spa.**
WHERE: **Melbourne, Derbyshire.**
PRICE: **From £575 for two people.**
WEBSITE: **breedonprioryspa.co.uk.**

Fancy escaping to your own private spa? The Hideaway at Breedon Priory offers an intimate spa day for two, separate from the main spa, complete with a private lounge area, outdoor hot tub, mini bar, fire pit and double lounger. Not only will you be able to enjoy each other's company in privacy, you'll also be treated to a selection of exclusive spa treatments in your own double treatment room.

The perfect place to relax, rejuvenate and revive with someone special, your four-hour stay in The Hideaway will also include a delicious two-course lunch or afternoon tea. Before or after enjoying your private time together, you can join other guests and make use of the wellbeing facilities and relaxation areas in the main spa. You can also organise an overnight stay at the nearby Breedon Hall Country House B&B, with a 10 per cent discount, if you fancy extending your trip.

Meno matters

TIME FOR VITAMIN P



Author Kate Codrington shares why life can be better with a healthy dose of pleasure at any age – but especially after menopause.

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU there was a magic pill that could improve every area of your health and even make you live longer? I call this pill vitamin P. It's free, has only beneficial side effects, has no environmental impact and is accessible to you right now. The P is for pleasure, and refers to simple, mindful moments you can give yourself everyday to counteract the stresses of life and improve your health.

Focusing only on problems as we get older can end up becoming a negative mental spiral. For although we live in ageing bodies, choosing to live with a youthful mindset and in a way that increases the pleasure you experience will help make you healthier and happier.

Our culture tends to value women who look after others and are productive, so it can be hard to put yourself first. But if you don't, you're missing out on a host of benefits, and won't be able to help your loved ones as well as you'd like. Remember the saying: "You can't fill from an empty cup".

GUILTY PLEASURES?

Imagine you were to stop working through your to-do list and go find something pleasurable to do right now. How does that thought make you feel? Does it spark tension or unease? Feelings of guilt or shame? Perhaps thoughts arise such as: "I'm too old, too tired, have no time, not enough money", etc? These thoughts and feelings usually originate from childhood experiences, but may no longer be relevant or helpful for you. Another misconception is that pleasure should be expensive, which is far from the truth. Being present in the moment and fully engaging your senses brings about the possibilities of admiring a newly opened flower – go seek snowdrops as they'll soon be emerging – feeling the sun or a gentle breeze on your skin, or laughing at a funny film, all of which count as pleasure.

As Michelle Obama once said, if you don't prioritise yourself, you constantly start falling lower and lower on your list.

GOOD FOR YOUR HORMONES

In terms of how pleasure works to improve your health, it reduces the stress hormone cortisol and activates the "rest and digest" part of your nervous system. These stress-reducing benefits not only help calm anxiety and depression, but also help improve your heart health, bone health, your capacity to heal from operations and wounds, and support your immune system, making you more resistant to viruses. In other words, all the stuff we tend to worry about as we get older and pass menopause.

Remember, though, it can take seven years after your last period for your hormones to settle again, and pleasure will help with this process. Pleasurable experiences trigger oxytocin, known as the "love hormone", which promotes connection and bonding. Pleasure can also increase endorphins, your natural painkillers.

While you may not be able to control the stress going on around you, you can take control of your internal world and prioritise pleasure. Life is too short to deprive yourself of the things you love, so think about how you can boost your intake of vitamin P today – you'll be glad you did!

WORDS: KATE CODRINGTON.
IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

YOUR DAILY DOSE OF PLEASURE

A little of what you fancy does you good! Kate shares some ideas to get you going...

Eating more slowly while enjoying the flavour of every mouthful increases the feel-good hormone dopamine as well as endorphins. You can also get an oxytocin boost if you share good food with friends.

Looking at something you find beautiful soothes your nervous system, reduces stress and can even alter your experience of time. Just let your eyes rest on something that pleases you and notice the effect in your body.

Laughing is magical; its stress-reducing benefits lower the risk of heart attacks, increase pain tolerance and decrease inflammation in your body. Watch a funny movie or fake a smile – that works, too!

Instead of doing exercise resentfully, move in a way that makes you feel good. Ask yourself what your body craves rather than what you think you ought to do. How about dancing around the kitchen to your favourite tunes?

Get creative with your clothing – choose sumptuous, soft, feel-good fabrics. Also get creative in the kitchen by trying out new recipes that include your favourite ingredients. Food, after all, is strongly linked to pleasure.

Connecting with nature offers endless benefits for mental and physical wellbeing – even caring for a houseplant or looking at an image of nature relaxes your brain, reduces stress hormones and improves heart health.

Get curious about what is pleasurable for you when it comes to sex. Experiment on your own and be curious about what feels nice, then perhaps share that with a partner if you have one. An orgasm will offer better sleep and less stress, too!

Feeling part of a community, especially as a volunteer, has been shown to improve heart health, mental health and even Alzheimer's, and brings you pleasure from helping others.

A massage is great for some pampering, but you can also get similar benefits with a bit of DIY touch therapy. Getting someone to comb your hair can be super-relaxing, and even putting on hand cream, if done in long, slow strokes, can help you destress. Stroking a pet or cuddling your partner generates oxytocin, too.

second spring
The self-care guide to menopause
kate codrington

Kate Codrington is the author of *Second Spring: The Self-care Guide to Menopause* (£14.99, HarperCollins). She offers workshops and a one-to-one menopause "doula" service. You'll find free resources at katecodrington.co.uk and you can connect with Kate at instagram.com/kate_codrington.

3 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR HEART

With February being the month of love, as well as the British Heart Foundation's Heart Month, we look at some simple ways to help you keep your ticker on top form.

ENSURE YOU DRINK LOTS OF H2O

Drinking plenty of water every day could lower your chances of heart failure, especially if you're over the age of 65. Researchers at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in the US concluded that women should be drinking up to two litres of liquids a day to reduce the risk of heart problems and heart failure.

The scientists say they found a link between dehydration and cardiac fibrosis, which is a hardening of the heart muscles. They tracked the heart health and hydration levels of almost 12,000 people, of which around 1,400 developed heart failure over the course of the 25-year study. The researchers could tell how well participants were staying hydrated by their levels of serum sodium – the level of sodium in the blood. This increases as your body's fluid levels fall.

Serum sodium levels are a predictor of heart failure and ventricular hypertrophy, as well as an enlargement and thickening of the heart. People with levels on the high end of normal by middle age were 39 per cent more likely to have heart failure.

In a separate analysis of nearly 5,000 70- to 90-year-olds at the end of the study, those with high-to-normal sodium at middle age had double the risk of hypertrophy, as well as a 54 per cent increased risk of heart failure, compared to those with low-to-normal serum sodium levels.

For more on why water is good for you, see page 38.

Do lots of housework!

Okay, so this one might not sound so much fun, however, doing daily chores will help your heart in the long run and keep you living longer.

A 2022 study at the University of California San Diego found that people who are active around the house for four hours every day are 62 per cent less likely to experience a fatal heart attack. They also have 43 per cent lower risk of heart disease compared to people who are less active. Most things count, such as cleaning, vacuuming, doing laundry or ironing, cooking or gardening. The main thing is to be on your feet for at least four hours every day – those who only spent two hours being active didn't experience a reduction in risk. This regular activity is just as beneficial as more strenuous activity, such as running or brisk walking, according to the researchers.

43%

...the reduction in risk of heart disease if you do four hours of daily chores compared to people who are less active.

WORDS: ALISON HARDINGE. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

EAT AN EGG A DAY

Once touted as a major cause of heart disease, eggs are now known to be good for you – they even protect your heart by increasing levels of what's called "good" cholesterol, i.e. high-density lipoprotein (HDL).

Researchers at Peking University and Oxford University discovered that people who regularly eat eggs are far less likely to get heart disease or a stroke because they have higher levels of a protein that builds HDL cholesterol. They analysed blood samples from 4,778 participants, 3,401 of which had cardiovascular disease. Those who ate eggs in moderation had high levels of apolipoprotein A1, (APOA1), which is a building block for HDL cholesterol.

A HIDDEN CAUSE OF PAIN?

Unexplained aches could be down to an overlooked part of your anatomy called fascia. We look at what it is and why it could be causing discomfort.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

A SHARP TWINGE in the shoulder or a grinding ache in the back are debilitating everyday experiences for millions of women in the UK. About 38 per cent of women have chronic pain, with the most common type being back pain.

Not knowing the cause of bodily pain means it can't be treated in order to heal, only masked. An estimated 7.1 million adults in England alone are regularly prescribed painkillers. But new research is uncovering an overlooked source of unexplained aches and pains – one that can be tackled with simple lifestyle changes.

> 'Fascia is like scaffolding for your body. It's a matrix of structural support around cells.'

You probably haven't heard of fascia, but this connective tissue runs throughout your body and it protects every internal organ, cell, nerve, vessel and muscle. 'Fascia is like scaffolding for your body. It's a matrix of structural support around cells, keeping everything in place. It's made from layers of mostly collagen fibres, plus some elastic fibres with a viscous gel containing hyaluronic acid between the layers, allowing for flowing, easy movement,' says Camilla Ranje Nordin, fascia teacher at The Fascia Guide (fasciaguide.com), an insightful online educational resource.

Until recently, fascia was thought to play a passive role in the body, but new findings from scientists such as Professor Carla Stecco from the University of Padova, Italy, have now redefined fascia as an active functional system, enabling cell communication, which is vital for tissue repair, immunity and keeping your body in balance (homeostasis). Fascia allows for the smooth flow of movement and for the free flow of communication between different parts of your body. So, it's actually a very sensitive connective system that can become dysfunctional by tightening or thickening in places, which may cause pain.

'Fascia is loaded with nerve and pain receptors. So, if your fascia becomes dense, then it puts pressure on these receptors, causing pain. Fascia can become dense from inflammation or from lack of movement,' says Camilla.

LIFESTYLE INFLUENCES

New research shows increased density or thickening in sections of fascia that enclose lower back muscles can cause otherwise unexplained back pain. Another study found that fascia is sensitive to the changing levels of sex hormones, such as oestrogen, which may explain why more women than men suffer from chronic pain, and it also suggests a reason for the aches and pains that come and go throughout the month.

Other causes of fascia dysfunction due to thickening, include stress, diet and poor posture. 'Fascia loads and unloads pressure as you move, so having bad posture for too long can cause fascia to adjust to that position, and become dense in that spot, and you get pain,' says Axel Bohlin, founder of The Fascia Guide (fasciaguide.com). 'Stress and a sugary diet are also a common cause because cortisol can inflame fascia,' he adds.

Improving your fascia health to alleviate pain isn't complicated, but you have to remember to incorporate it into your routine every day. 'A healthy lifestyle with moderate exercise, such as long walks, reducing stress, a nutritious diet and sleeping well will keep fascia healthy. Regular movement is especially important to stop fascia tightening up,' says Axel, who advocates stretching and yoga.

'If you sit at a desk all day, be sure to stand and stretch your arms and neck often – and take proper breaks every 45 minutes to walk around. Deep breathing is also essential as it reduces stress and can lower blood pressure (see tips, right). Sounds simple but we often forget to actually do these things.'

ROLFING TECHNIQUES

Targeted massage is also a good way of relieving fascia pain, with one study finding that manipulating the fascia with massage resulted in a significant reduction in pain. One such beneficial technique is Rolfing (rolfinguk.co.uk), which is method of deep tissue manipulation, created by American biochemist Dr Ida Rolf. Benefits include improved posture, flexibility and range of movement, plus easing acute and chronic pain.

'As Rolfers, we work with our hands to change the structure of the fascia system, which often has imbalances, such as parts that are bunched up, or parts not functioning so well,' explains Rolfer Hayley Matthews (rolfingwithhayley.org).

Practitioners manually work through the layers in the body, and slowly unravel the layers of fascia stuck together in adhesions due to posture, repetitive movements, injuries or trauma. 'If you have an injury or if you repeatedly put strain on your posture, such as by sitting at a desk daily or playing tennis a lot, fascia holds that tension. It's a web connecting the whole body, so it connects your habits and injuries all together very often,' says Hayley.

> 'Running on the balls of your feet is great for fascia elasticity and resilience. Strong fascia layers run under the hinge of the big toes and "bouncing" stretches this layer.'

6 TIPS FOR HEALTHY FASCIA

Camilla & Axel of The Fascia Guide share some tips for improving your fascia and reducing pain.

1 **Deep breathe** This triggers the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps you relax. Try to breathe through your nose, rather than your mouth, as this can lower blood pressure. Inhale for six seconds through your nose. Hold for six seconds, then exhale for six seconds through your nose. Spend 10 minutes every day doing deep breathing. This lowers your breathing rate and moves your diaphragm low in your body so your shoulders and neck relax and stress fades away.

2 **Stretch** This could be simple and gentle arm or neck stretches, or doing yoga. Any daily movement with slow stretching of your body helps fascia suppleness and elasticity.

3 **Move frequently** Avoid sitting for too long in the same position. Get up, fidget and take regular breaks from desk work.

4 **Don't strain** Whether through bad posture, repetitive movements, heavy lifting or twisting, straining your body can damage fascia and create inflammation and movement restrictions.

5 **Avoid sugar** This substance initiates inflammatory processes in your body and produces a rigid fascia.

6 **Destress** Stress triggers high levels of cortisol, which can cause inflammation of the fascia, resulting in pain in your body.

FIND OUT MORE

Head to The Fascia Guide (fasciaguide.com) where you learn more about about fascia, plus how to keep it healthy and pain-free.

Hayley Matthews is a certified Rolfer, who qualified with the British Academy of Rolfing Structural Integration. She offers sessions in London, Chelmsford and Norwich.

START SMALL TO BUILD BIG!

Forget sweeping changes – small, regular tweaks to your routine are what add up to big health benefits, says Dr Michael Mosley. Follow his advice for improving energy levels, mood, sleep and brain power!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO overhaul your life to become healthier. Instead, building small changes into your routine can yield big benefits in terms of better mood, improved sleep, a sharper brain and reduced disease risk. The trick is to use everyday activities as triggers for your changes. For example, I perform resistance exercises straight after I get out of bed because if I don't do them then, I won't do them at all. So, I use "getting out of bed" as a trigger for these exercises. Also, establishing a new habit is about consistency and frequency. It takes between 18 and 254 days to ingrain a new habit, so stick with it!

WORDS: DR MICHAEL MOSLEY. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

TRY INTELLIGENT EXERCISES

Fewer than five per cent of people regularly do exercises targeted at building muscle. A shame because after the age of 30, you start to lose around five per cent muscle mass every decade. You need muscle to improve your posture and reduce the risk of back pain, plus muscles burn calories – even when you sleep.

Resistance exercises, which use muscle to lift or pull against resistance, are great for muscle-building. I prefer squats and press-ups, using your own body weight to make muscles work harder. A woman in her 50s should be able to do at least 10 press-ups in one session.

Squats work the biggest muscles in your body. Professor Damian Bailey told me moving your body up and down against resistance (a squat) seems to be particularly effective at stimulating blood flow to a part of the brain responsible for learning and memory (the hippocampus). That's why I call this an "intelligent" exercise.

Doing squats provides an increased blood supply and stimulates the release of a hormone called BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), which encourages the growth of new brain cells and connections. Try a couple of minutes of squats or press-ups every day.

DRINK WATER

Why not try knocking back a large glass of water instead of your morning coffee or tea? Studies show keeping hydrated improves attention and helps with problem-solving. It also enhances physical performance, keeps you calm and boosts mood.

Water makes up 60 per cent of your body and 90 per cent of your brain. You need it to hydrate skin, digest food and flush out waste. It's important to replace water lost in sweat, especially when exercising. Losing just two per cent water is enough to impair cognitive function.

Rehydration studies show drinking more water leads to short-term memory improvements and can reduce headaches. It could also help you lose weight. In a study, two groups adopted the same weight-loss diet, but one group drank a pint of water before each meal. That second group consumed fewer calories and lost most weight. So don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water. "By the time you notice thirst, your fluid content is probably quite low. Dehydration can affect your physical abilities, some mental faculties, mood and can induce fatigue," says Professor Stuart Galloway. He recommends women drink 1.6 litres. Add it to your routine by drinking a glass of water with every meal.

● **Water also helps your heart health – find out why on p30.**

STAND ON ONE LEG

If you were to pop your head around the bathroom door when I'm brushing my teeth, you'd see me standing on one leg. I do it for two minutes, switching legs every 30 seconds or so. Sometimes, if I'm feeling brave, I close my eyes and focus hard on trying not to wobble. I do this to improve my balance.

Research shows that by improving my balance, I am reducing my risk of injury, improving posture and possibly adding years to my life. Falls are the second-commonest cause of accidental deaths worldwide, after traffic accidents. So, having good balance is critical to reducing falls.

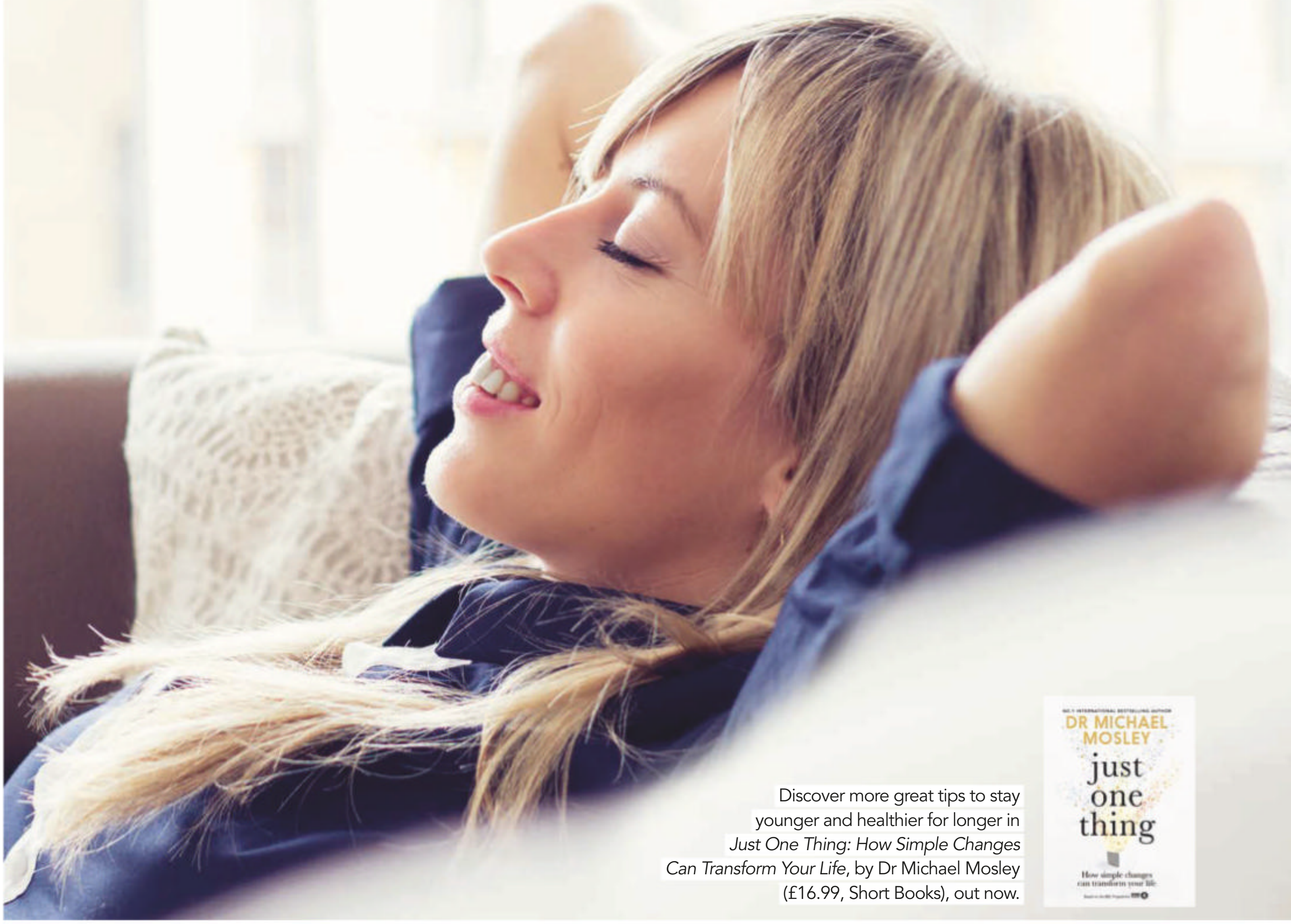
Balance is like muscle strength – use it or lose it! Ability to balance declines during your 40s and 50s, with sedentary lifestyles perhaps causing balance ability to decline more rapidly than previous generations. But studies show you can quickly improve balance for a positive effect on core strength and co-ordination.

Set a timer, take off your shoes, put your hands on your hips and stand on one leg. Close your eyes. You will be dismayed how quickly you start to sway. The test is over as soon as you shift your planted foot or put the raised foot down to stop yourself falling. In a study, people standing on one leg, aged 40-69 with eyes open averaged between 32-42 seconds and with eyes closed between 4-13 seconds. How do you measure up?

THINK YOURSELF STRONGER

Surprisingly, research shows that simply thinking about performing a physical activity or playing a sport can increase your muscle strength and boost your performance. In fact, elite athletes have long used a technique called "motor imagery", in which they imagine themselves performing successfully – and research suggests it can increase their chance of better performance. Motor imagery can help for other activities, too. Studies show surgeons perform better if they mentally rehearse an operation before they actually do it, while some professional musicians benefit from mentally practising their instrument, as well as playing it.

In 1990, researchers from Louisiana State University asked women to imagine extending their knee and contracting their thigh muscle in five-second bursts. At the end of the study, the strength in their thigh muscles had increased by 12.6 per cent. When a team I was working with conducted a similar experiment, we found muscle strength increased by 8 per cent. The muscles didn't actually get bigger, but it seems the volunteers were able to activate 20 per cent more muscle fibre having mentally rehearsed the action. "When you focus on an action or imagine you are performing a movement, you send focused signals to the relevant parts of your body. Although the muscles involved won't grow, the drive towards those muscles becomes more fine-tuned. We know motor imagery can improve accuracy, speed and strength," explains cognitive psychologist, Dr Helen O'Shea. Activate your motor imagery by spending 15-20 minutes a day mentally rehearsing a skill or activity you'd like to perfect.


DR MICHAEL MOSLEY
just one thing
How simple changes can transform your life

Discover more great tips to stay younger and healthier for longer in *Just One Thing: How Simple Changes Can Transform Your Life*, by Dr Michael Mosley (£16.99, Short Books), out now.

MAKE TIME FOR YOU

and improve your health

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HEALTH & BEAUTY

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4 lifestyle tweaks from TV's Dr Michael Mosley

9 WAYS TO FEEL GOOD!
Relax and enjoy each day

OLA JORDAN
'I'm fitter and healthier at 40'
The ex-*Strictly* star on how she dropped 3.5st!

TIGHTEN YOUR PELVIC FLOOR
in 3 easy moves

8 BODY O
TO HYDR
WINTER S

BEAT BACK PAIN
Discover the hidden cause

QUICK & TASTY STIR-FRIES
Make nutritious, simple dishes with a fiery kick!

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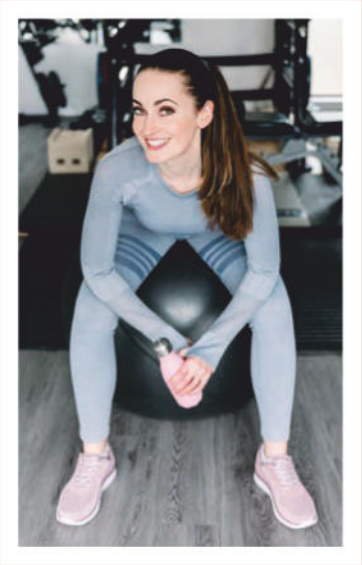

Subscribing to *Top Santé* is a great way to keep abreast of the latest health news and advice, and is a thoughtful gift for a friend or relative, too. Every issue is packed with the best health, beauty, nutrition and fitness tips to keep you feeling great all year! Katy x **Editor**

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ADVERTISING PROMOTION

"I loved learning how food affected my health"

Emma Alexander, Nutrition Graduate from The College of Naturopathic Medicine shares how she's built a career she's passionate about.

I SUFFERED FROM FACE AND body acne in my early teens, which continued into early adulthood. I spent years trying every product around, hoping something would help. I felt very uncomfortable in my skin; I was constantly trying to hide it from the world, with baggy t-shirts or by going on sunbeds to make my skin look darker so no one would notice my acne or scars. In my mid-twenties I started to learn about the effects of dairy and sugar on my body, and after a lot of research I decided to embark on an elimination diet for four weeks as a test. By the end, my skin had cleared up and I felt amazing. It was at that moment I finally realised the impact food had had on my body but I didn't know how it all linked together. I wanted to know more and to know exactly what was causing my breakouts and why.

INCREDIBLE DETAIL

In October 2017 I took a short course at CNM on natural skincare and nutrition and I was shocked to discover the link between nutrition and skin conditions. I picked up a leaflet on becoming a nutritional therapist and soon after I booked a consultation, then signed up to start in January 2018. The detail the course went in to was unbelievable. I especially loved the clinical training in the second year of the nutrition course, where I was able to apply my knowledge. The students and lecturers were so supportive and welcoming. I looked forward to studying and seeing everyone at the college on the weekends.

MY HEALTH KEEPS ON IMPROVING

My life has changed so much since studying at CNM. I now know how to look after my skin with nutrition and I've gained so much confidence, which I had always lacked before. I am now building a career I'm passionate about. Since graduating, I've decided to help people with acne and I intend to branch out into other skin conditions as I believe so many people are still not informed enough about how much nutrition affects your skin and I want to help as many people avoid the pitfalls I went through.

I not only get to apply what I've learned to clients but my own health is always improving because of the knowledge I've gained. Knowing that I have the ability to help someone look and feel better is the best feeling.

CNM is the No. 1 training provider for natural therapies. Its courses teach the importance of a naturopathic diet encouraging the use of whole, organic, seasonal plant-based foods prepared and eaten in a way that ensures maximum nutrient absorption and optimal health.

IHCAN EDUCATION AWARDS 2022 WINNER

READ MORE

To find out more about CNM's nutrition courses, scan the QR code with your phone – in camera mode, hold it over the box until a message pops up linking to their website.

BOLSTER YOUR DEFENCES!

It's still cold and wintery, so what better time to focus on supporting your immune system naturally? Our 12-page section contains advice on herbs, supplements and lifestyle tweaks to help you do just that.

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

SWIM FOR THE IMMUNITY WIN!

In a 2015 study investigating upper airway infections in 50 cold-water swimmers, non-swimmers and indoor pool swimmers, cold-water swimmers reported significantly fewer respiratory tract infections (RTIs).

Experienced winter swimmers were also found to have higher white blood cell counts compared to control groups. This was evident in a study from 2011 of ice swimmers before and after a 150m winter swim at 6°C (43°F), which concluded greater protection against inflammation and RTIs is very likely, suggesting an improved response to stress.

Find out more in the book *Winter Swimming: The Nordic Way Towards a Healthier and Happier Life*, by Dr Susanna Søberg (£22, MacLehose Press).

WINTER SWIMMING

Super supps

YOUR NEW *immunity* Boosters

With Top Santé readers twice as likely to take immune-boosting supplements than the average UK woman, we round up the latest formulas to strengthen your defences.

Budget-friendly

Vitl Immune Support (£9.99 for 30, vitl.com)

Filler-free and vegan, these capsules are powered by vitamin C, D and zinc, plus turmeric and elderberry, to support the maintenance and development of immune cells, promote the normal functioning of your immune system and reduce the severity and incidence of colds.

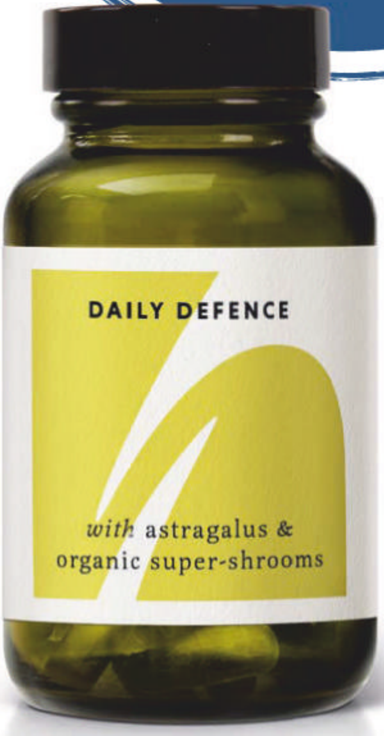
vitl
Immune Support
With vitamin C, vitamin D & zinc, plus turmeric
30 vegan capsules | Food supp

A plant-based powerhouse

Welleco Immune Elixir (£35 for 60, welleco.co.uk)

Formulated for pre-emptive and reactive effectiveness, this powerhouse blend of zinc, natural vitamin C, astragalus, olive leaf, elderberry and reishi mushroom helps support a healthy immune system and relieve symptoms of the common cold.

WelleCo
AUSTRALIA
THE IMMUNE ELIXIR
SUPPORT & MAINTAIN


DAILY DEFENCE
with astragalus & organic super-shrooms

Rich in adaptogens

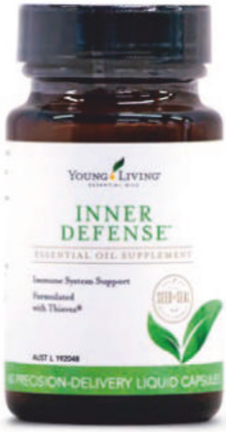
Herbtender Daily Defence (£30 for 60, the-herbtender.com)

With adaptogens, organic mushrooms, vitamin C and echinacea, these all-natural vegan supplements support for your immune system. They also contain astragalus root, which has been used for centuries to prevent colds and respiratory infections.

WORDS: LILY SMITH. *STAT: TOP SANTÉ READER SURVEY 2022.

Contains bug-busting essential oils

Young Living Inner Defense (£34.54 for 30, youngliving.com/en)


YOUNG LIVING
INNER DEFENSE
ESSENTIAL OIL SUPPLEMENT

These soft gels contain a mix of essential oils, including oregano, thyme and Young Living's signature "Thieves" blend, all designed to reinforce your defences and promote healthy respiratory function, while warding off unwanted yeasts and funguses.

myota
Immunity regulator
300g

Improves gut health

Immunity Regulator Precision Fibre Mix (£45 for one month, shop.hellomyota.com)

Inspired by 10 years of research, this gluten-free, fibre-rich formula restores digestive health and strengthens your gut lining, helping to boost immune health and reducing your risk of chronic disease.

◆

Boosts your energy

Zest Active (from £29.95 for 30 sachets, reviveactive.com)

Designed to support immunity, boost energy and improve muscle function, this vegan supplement contains 25 scientifically formulated ingredients including a yeast beta 1,3/1,6 glucan, proven to strengthen immunity, plus vitamins C, D and B12, copper, zinc and more.

revive active
zest active
EASILY ABSORBED
wellmune
L-Lysine
L-Theanine
Taurine

T-REGS
NAD+
Phyto
30 VEGGIE CAPSULES

◆

Promotes longevity

T-REGS NAD+ Phyto capsules (£35, ivboost.uk)

Bolster immunity, fight fatigue and restore energy with this powerhouse formula containing NAD+, which is vital for cellular metabolism and overall health, plus more than 350 anti-inflammatory, antioxidant phytonutrients. It comes in capsules or an oral spray.

73%

... that's how many of you, according to our recent survey, have taken supplements over the past year. And 47 per cent are taking them for immune support.*

VITAMIN INJECTIONS
VITAMIN D3
Patches

Highly absorbable

Vitamin Injections London D3 Patches (£49.99 for 32, vilwellness.com)

During winter, your body can't make enough vitamin D, which affects your immunity. These patches provide up to 24 hours of continuous vitamin D3 delivered directly into your bloodstream, plus magnesium and calcium.

CAN CANNABIS HELP BEAT COVID?

CBD specialist health writer Ruby Deevoy looks at why extracts of the cannabis plant could prove useful in boosting immunity – especially when it comes to Covid-19.

A SWATHE OF STUDIES carried out in 2022 found that cannabis may prove to be a fundamental tool in the treatment and prevention of Covid-19. There is more research in the works as well, looking at the plant's potential for treating Long Covid.

However, the findings in one key study showed that it's not as straightforward as smoking a joint to keep the virus at bay! In fact, heating raw cannabis material will transform the "cannabinoid acids" – noted in the peer-reviewed study to prevent entry of the SARS-COV-2 virus into cells and treat infection – into something else entirely. So, let's break it down. What do we actually know about using cannabis to treat Covid?

WHAT THE STUDY SAYS

The now famous paper*, published in the *Journal of Natural Products*, discovered that cannabinoid acids CBDa and CBGa, found in raw cannabis material, may have the potential to prevent infection of human epithelial cells (cells found in your skin, blood vessels, urinary tract and organs). We say "may", because while the initial findings are extremely promising, the research was performed on human cells rather than in actual humans and/or animals.

The next step will be to determine whether the findings translate to real-life application. Researchers will also have to figure out appropriate dosages to develop an effective medicine, as cannabis medications tend to be very dose dependent.

> 'Raw cannabis may have the potential to prevent infection of human epithelial cells.'

WORDS: RUBY DEEVOY. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK. *PUBMED.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/35007072. **SPINE-HEALTH.COM/TREATMENT/PAIN-MEDICATION/UNDERSTANDING-COX-2-INHIBITOR-SIDE-EFFECTS.

WHAT ARE CANNABINOID ACIDS?

Cannabinoid acids, such as CBDa, are not the same as cannabinoids, such as CBD, which is now popular in the wellbeing world, and THC, which is the psychoactive element of cannabis. The acids are the pre-cursor to fatty cannabinoid molecules, and they have vastly superior bio-availability – meaning the amount that actually gets absorbed – as they are water-soluble. They also do not get you high, as THC does. These molecules can be found in raw cannabis plants and, once heated, they turn into cannabinoids, such as the ones you'll find in most CBD oils.

BENEFITS OF CBDa

Aside from its potential to reduce transmission of Covid, CBDa has many other health benefits. Like CBD, CBDa doesn't directly activate your endocannabinoid system (your body creates its own endocannabinoids to reduce pain and enhance pleasure among other things). Instead, it has been shown to inhibit the COX-2 enzyme, which is expressed by inflammatory cells, usually after an infection or injury. Pharmaceutical COX-2 inhibitors, including NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, are commonly used to target inflammation, arthritis and back pain**.

… AND OF CBGa

CBGa is what's known as a "foundational compound" of the cannabis flower, as it's top of the chain of reactions that create CBDa (and other acids) and, eventually, cannabinoids such as CBD.

Current UK regulations make it illegal to grow cannabis plants unless you have a licence, so your best bet is to drink lots of hemp tea (see 5 to try, right). Or, opt for a raw or "whole plant" CBD oil, which contains both cannabinoids and cannabinoid acids. Some have a pretty harsh taste though!

5 to try

- ● **Biopurus 4% Organic Hemp Tea** (£21.99, fortheageless.com).
- ● **Ardoa Amber 42** (£69.99, ardoamarket.co.uk).
- ● **Hempen Cold Pressed CBD Oil 1500mg** (£100, hempen.co.uk).
- ● **Sweet Pink 10% Whole Plant CBD Oil** (£65, sweetpinkcbd.co.uk).
- ● **Karma Coast CBD oil** (from £40, karmacoastcbd.co.uk).

6 WAYS TO BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

Feeling a little down? Changes to your environment can help you feel upbeat during what can be a dark and depressing time of year. Light therapy helps modulate your immune system, so these small tweaks will help you feel better in body and mind.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY are the darkest, coldest months of the year and this can impact your mood. Many of us are familiar with the saying "winter blues", also known as winter depression or seasonal affective disorder (SAD), which is thought to affect one-in-15 people in the UK.

'Even though millions of people report experiencing winter-related low mood, there are many misconceptions about this issue, possibly due to the fact that symptoms can vary so much from person to person,' says Lisa Gunn of Nuffield Health's mental health prevention team. 'SAD occurs more commonly in people living in Northern latitudes and is also more commonly experienced by women,' she adds.

The condition is characterised by a low mood you can't shake off during the winter months. It can affect your emotional wellbeing so much that you lose interest in things you usually enjoy. 'People can experience winter blues in various degrees, ranging from feeling a bit down to finding it very difficult to function which may lead to taking time off work,' says Lisa.

Similar to depression, the symptoms of SAD may include some, but not necessarily all, of the following:

- **Persistent low mood.**
- **Loss of pleasure or interest in normal everyday activities.**
- **Irritability.**
- **Feelings of despair, guilt and worthlessness.**
- **Lethargy (lacking in energy) and feeling sleepy during the day.**
- **Sleeping for longer than normal and finding it hard to get up in the morning.**
- **Craving carbohydrates and gaining weight.**

WORDS: ALISON HARDINGE. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

1

Get more exposure to sunlight

Given the problem is associated with a lack of sunlight, the first tip is to spend more time in the sun – even a brief lunchtime walk can be beneficial. You can also make your work and home environments as light and airy as possible and sit near windows when indoors. Access to sunlight is likely to boost your mood.

2

TRY LIGHT THERAPY

Although the research in this area is mixed, some people find that light therapy can help improve their mood considerably. This involves sitting by a special lamp called a light box, for around 30 minutes to an hour each morning.

Light boxes come in a variety of designs, including desk lamps and wall-mounted fixtures. They produce a very bright light. The intensity of the light is measured in lux – the higher lux, the brighter the light (see panel page 51).

Dawn-simulating alarm clocks, which gradually light up your bedroom as you wake up, may also be useful. It's thought the light may improve symptoms by encouraging your brain to reduce the production of melatonin – a hormone that makes you sleepy – and increase the production of serotonin, which affects your mood in a positive way.

3

BE SURE TO STAY ACTIVE

Activity has even more benefits for emotional wellbeing with research consistently showing how it can help to improve mood.

It also helps by providing a pleasant change of scenery, as well as the opportunity to meet new people. Being outside doing exercises will boost your mood and will make you feel more connected to your surroundings. It also helps you gain perspective, particularly spending time in nature.

4

EAT WELL AND SWERVE CARBS

It's important to eat well during the darker days. Winter blues can make you crave sugary foods and carbohydrates such as chocolate, pasta and bread, but don't forget to include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet.

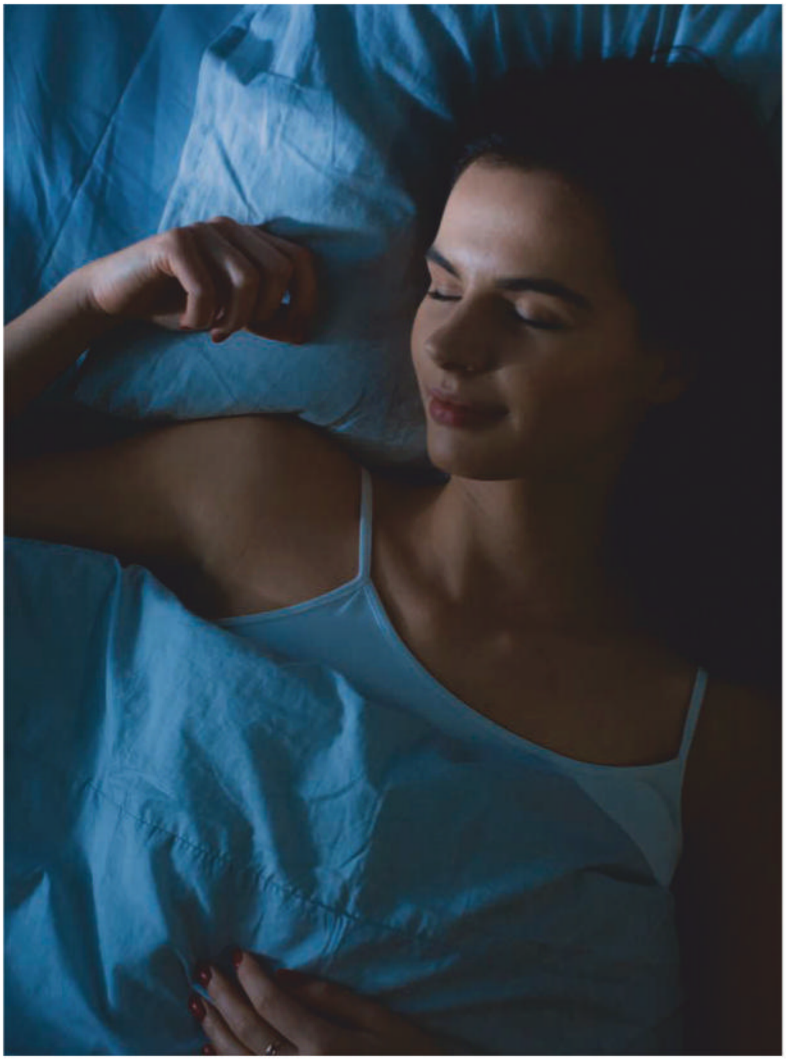
Nutrition plays a big role in how we feel. Having a varied balanced diet can set you on a path to improve your symptoms. Eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and healthy fats will give you more energy and prevent you from feeling sluggish.

5

STAY CONNECTED

People often go out less during winter due to poor weather and dark nights. The urge to "hibernate" can result in you becoming withdrawn and spending less time with others. Social connections are key to your wellbeing.

On a biological level, isolation is toxic to the human nervous system. Lack of human connection puts your mental and physical health at risk. Having meaningful relationships and being able to give to others can greatly improve your resilience. Your body releases feel-good chemicals such as oxytocin and dopamine when you feel connected to others and are engaged in positive interactions.



6

GET A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP

Sleep and mood are closely connected, and getting good-quality kip can help to improve your mood. One of the most effective ways to do this is to develop a regular sleep routine. As adults, this is often something we forget, but you can “train” yourself to wake up and go to sleep at the same time, which helps, as can creating a relaxing routine before bed.

It can also help to avoid strenuous physical activity before bed as well as avoiding going to sleep on a full or completely empty stomach, as these can all interrupt sleep.

Consider eating your main meal a few hours before bed. If you do start to get peckish before bedtime, consider a small snack that includes protein and some carbs.

You should limit caffeine, nicotine and alcohol too, as they are stimulants and work to keep you awake. They can also cause fragmented sleep and breaks in the natural sleep cycles.

Another good tip is to take all electric devices out of your bedroom, as even small amounts of light can affect your sensitive circadian rhythm, aka your natural body clock.

SAD LAMP REVIEWS: EVE BOGGENPOEL.

3 of the best…

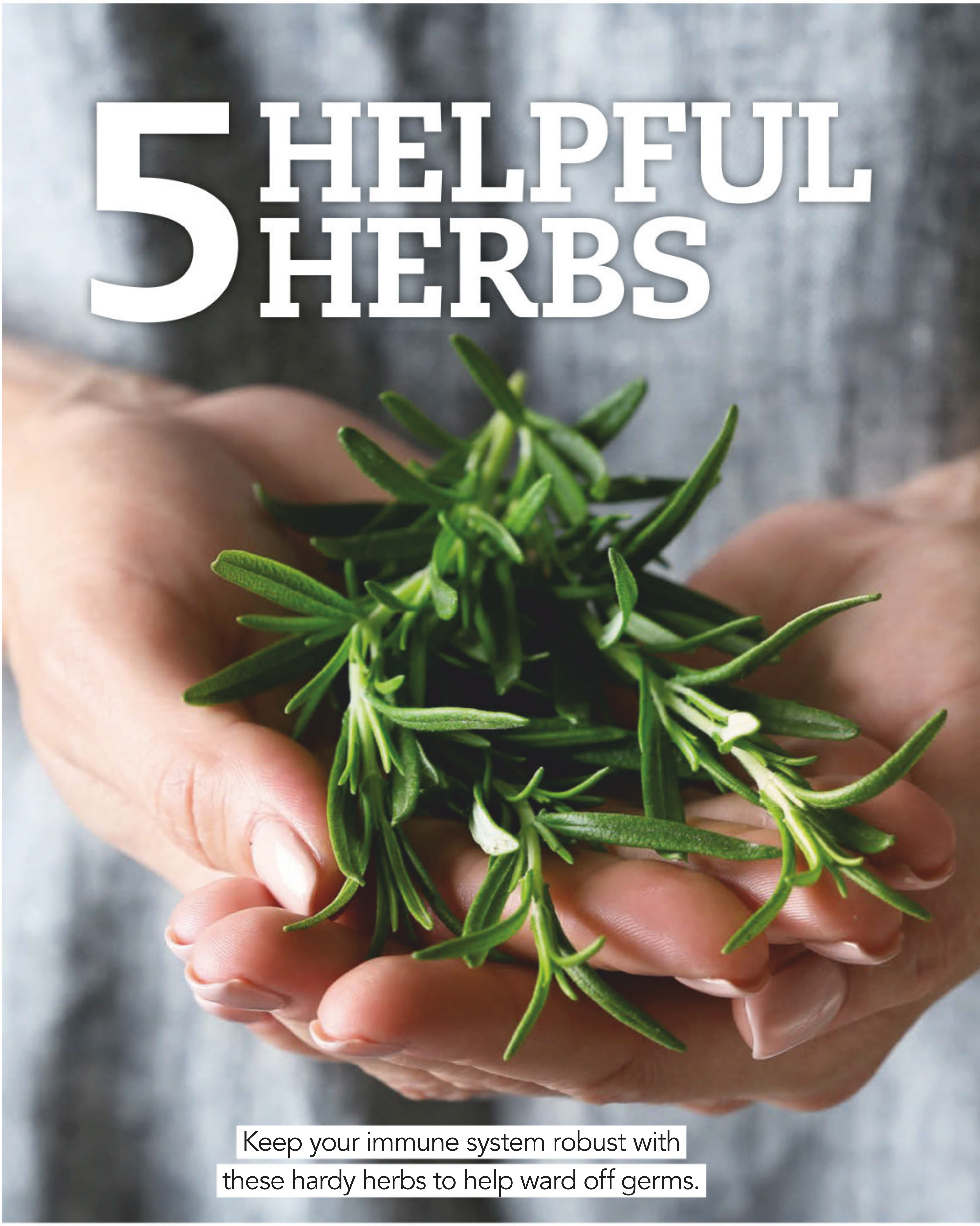
SAD lamps

TL 45 Perfect Day daylight therapy lamp (£89.99, johnlewis.com)
Imitate the course of a sunny day. Choose the Therapy setting for a morning dose of 10,000 lux to boost mood; switch to the warmer Active mode to aid concentration levels during the day and opt for Relax mode in the evening for a blue-light free glow.

Halo Lamp (£219, johnlewis.com)
Brighten your day with this beautiful multifunctional light therapy lamp. With both cool- and warm-light settings, you can boost mood, productivity and energy in Day Mode (10,000 lux) or relax in Evening Mode (2,500 lux). The honey-coloured back-lit frame makes the lamp feel even more like a glowing sun!

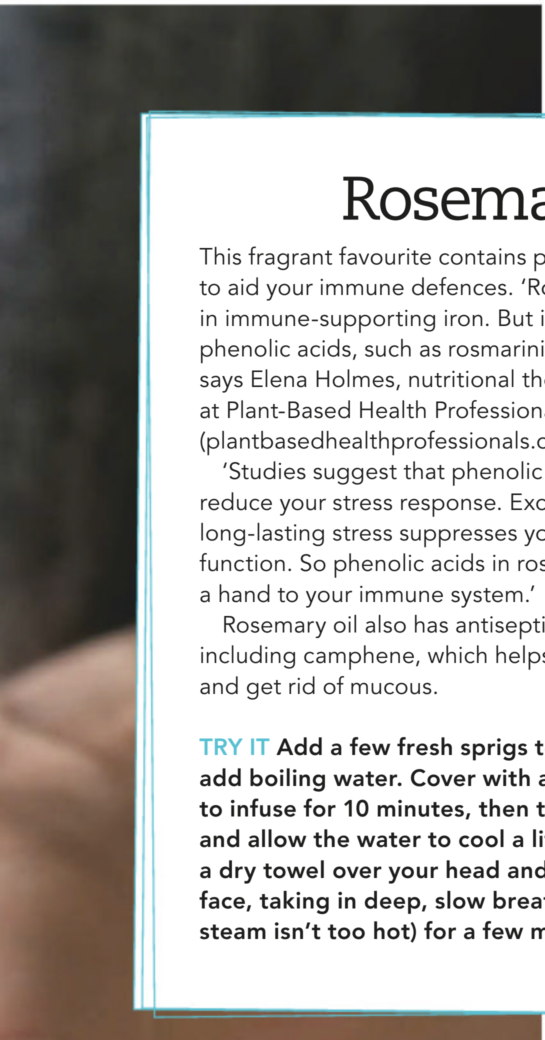
Bodyclock Luxe 750DAB (£229, lumie.com)
Improve your sleep, mood and energy with this wake-up light with 20 in-built sounds: drift off to glowing sunsets and rhythmic waves, chirping crickets or gentle rainfall, then wake up to a dawn chorus or solo blackbird and gradually increasing light that simulates sunrise. It also includes DAB radio.

5 HELPFUL HERBS



Keep your immune system robust with these hardy herbs to help ward off germs.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK. *NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC8440074/. **PUBMED.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/29744941/



Rosemary

This fragrant favourite contains powerful antioxidants to aid your immune defences. 'Rosemary is rich in immune-supporting iron. But it also contains phenolic acids, such as rosmarinic and carnosic,' says Elena Holmes, nutritional therapist at Plant-Based Health Professionals UK (plantbasedhealthprofessionals.com).

'Studies suggest that phenolic acids can help reduce your stress response. Excessive and long-lasting stress suppresses your immune function. So phenolic acids in rosemary lend a hand to your immune system.'

Rosemary oil also has antiseptic compounds including camphene, which helps you decongest and get rid of mucous.

TRY IT **Add a few fresh sprigs to a large bowl and add boiling water. Cover with a towel and allow to infuse for 10 minutes, then take off the towel and allow the water to cool a little before draping a dry towel over your head and steaming your face, taking in deep, slow breathes (make sure the steam isn't too hot) for a few minutes at a time.**

CHIVES

These pretty purple-flowering green stems add a light, onion-style garnish to meals, while also being an immune nutrient powerhouse. 'Chives are bursting with immune-supporting vitamins C and A. Both vitamins help to maintain skin and mucosal integrity (the barrier lining of your mouth, nose and lungs), making it more difficult for microbes to invade your body. Plus, folic acid, which is vital for the development of immune cells, and fibre, which supports immunity by feeding beneficial microorganisms in your gut, are also plentiful in chives,' says Elena.

'Phytochemicals in chives, such as allicin and quercetin, aid good immune function with their potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties,' she adds.

TRY IT **Sprinkle chives into soups, stews or salads. Or make chive oil by soaking chopped chive stems in olive oil for two weeks.**

Mint

Lush green mint leaves make a zingy addition to both savoury and sweet meals as well as drinks, and they also pack a punch in the immunity stakes. 'Mint is rich in an immune-supportive trio of vitamin A, folate and iron, which aids the growth of immune cells. The phytochemicals it contains, such as menthol, caffeic acid, ferulic acids and coumarin, also help the immune system fight off infections and recover from inflammation, as well as being antimicrobial,' says Elena.

A recent review study found coumarin could be effective against multiple strains of bacteria*.

TRY IT **Inhale the scent by putting some mint essential oil into a diffuser. Or, steep mint leaves in hot water for five minutes to enjoy a refreshing, immune-supportive brew.**

OREGANO

This pungent perennial plant is often used to bring a hint of earthy sweetness to Mediterranean, Mexican and Turkish dishes. 'Oregano is packed with vitamins A, C and E, plus folic acid. Vitamin E is critical for immune function. The herb also contains carvacrol, thymol and terpinene, phytochemicals with potent anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties that significantly contribute to fighting infections and recovering from them,' says Elena.

A study** found carvacrol is particularly effective in bolstering immunity against food-borne pathogens, including E-coli and salmonella infections.

TRY IT **Add the fresh herb to stir-fries, stews and pizza, or take it as a tincture or capsules.**

Thyme

This aromatic evergreen herb elevates all kinds of savoury dishes and grows readily in a window pot. 'It's full of vitamins A and C, and iron, as well as numerous polyphenols,' says Elena. 'Most notable are carvacrol and thymol.' They reduce inflammation, congestion and alleviate coughs, which assists the immune system in doing its job defending you.

TRY IT **Breathe in thyme's anti-congestion and cough-soothing benefits by adding a few drops of the essential oil to a diffuser. Alternatively, inhale the scent as a steam treatment using sprigs of thyme or essential oil (as described for rosemary).**

Being indoors more often during winter can mean greater exposure to house dust mites and germs. Try Puressentiel Purifying Air Spray (£19.99, uk.puressentiel.com) to ward off airborne pathogens, thanks to rosemary, juniper, dill and other helpful plant extracts.

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CARE FOR YOUR WHOLE BODY WITH CURCUMIN

Discover the health benefits of this time-honoured medicinal plant

THOUGH IT MAY sound like a spice in itself, curcumin is the yellow pigment and active ingredient found in turmeric. It has been used for thousands of years for both culinary and medicinal purposes and has several health benefits. However, the curcumin in turmeric has poor bioavailability, and has trouble being well enough absorbed by the body for significant benefits. But there are ways around this!

BENEFITS OF CURCUMIN

Curcumin has powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Inflammation is at the core of many chronic conditions, including arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, obesity, depression and cancer, but curcumin has been shown to help suppress inflammation throughout the body. It can be especially beneficial to those living an active lifestyle, to help combat joint inflammation, especially when combined with copper to support connective tissues and vitamin D for healthy bones and muscles, as in the Bioglan Active Curcumin tablets.

BETTER ABSORPTION

One way to improve the absorption of curcumin is to combine it with other ingredients. For example, piperine, the main active component in black pepper, can help to increase the bioavailability of curcumin by up to 2,000 per cent. Whilst adding pepper to your curry could help to a small extent, the levels of curcumin in turmeric are fairly low. To enjoy its true benefits, it's best to take a concentrated supplement such as Bioglan Active Curcumin, which contains 12,640mg of turmeric per tablet, and a patented black pepper extract to aid absorption. One a day is all it takes!

A TASTY WAY TO TAKE CURCUMIN

If you're looking for a more exciting way of adding curcumin to your diet, Bioglan has also launched Active Curcumin Gummies. Soft and orange flavoured, they make it even easier to build curcumin into your daily routine. Each gummy contains 50mg of Cursol, a standardised turmeric extract that is micro-encapsulated to enhance curcumin absorption compared to regular extract. The gummies also contain vitamin C and zinc for immune support, and vitamin D for bone and muscle health.

Bioglan Active Curcumin is available at Holland & Barrett, Boots, Amazon and Ocado.

BIOGLAN
ACTIVE
CURCUMIN

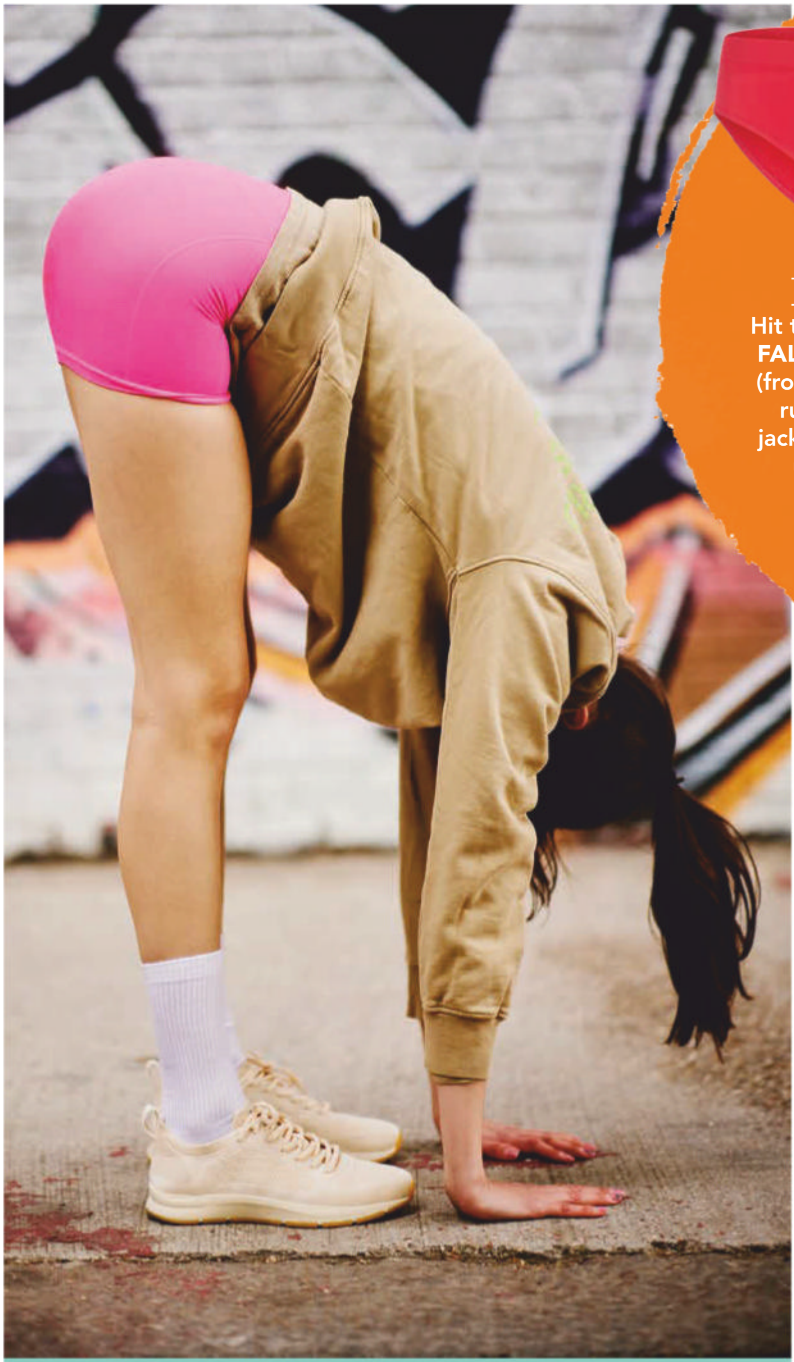
TOP FITNESS

Sweat in style this February with our pick of the latest high-performance workout kit.

BEST FOOT FORWARD!

If you didn't get socks for Christmas, you might want to consider signing up to the **Sock Subscription Service** from active lifestyle brand Stance (from £16.99 for two pairs, stance.eu.com). Make it work for you – choose to receive from two to four pairs, plus whether you want the delivery every month or every three months – then your socks will be shipped out on the first of the month.

WORDS: SARAH SELLENS. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK. STAT: *ACCORDING TO A STUDY FROM SWEATBAND.COM.



RENEWABLE MATERIALS

Race forward in clothing made from renewable materials by high-performance, low-impact sportswear brand, hylo ATHLETICS. Launched in 2020 by ex-footballer Michael Doughty, the brand uses innovative materials to reduce the use of fossil fuels. Focusing on footwear first, the brand has launched the **hylo LIGHT** (£110, hyloathletics.com, pictured above) – an everyday trainer that's breathable, light and made with renewable materials such as sugarcane, corn and algae. While the hylo RUN (£140) is ultra-responsive with a cushioned EVA midsole and is perfect for short-to-middle-distance runs. Impressive.

FALKE
FALKE

PACE PERFECT

Hit the roads running in the new FALKE SS23 Running Collection (from £19, falke.com), a range of run kit featuring high-function jackets, bras, tops, leggings, shorts, underwear and socks. Great for layering, the collection can be mixed and matched according to the temperature and type of run.

BUDGET FITNESS FIX

Update your workout wardrobe without breaking the bank by heading to Tesco for F&F's latest Active collection. Featuring bright and bold tops and print leggings, you'll find the tech you need to sweat in style this February, with breathable fabrics, thermal linings and reflective trims. We love the style and bright colour of this **Twist Front Tee** (from £6, Tesco stores and next.co.uk), which would be the perfect top layer for a yoga class, Pilates session or home workout.

38%

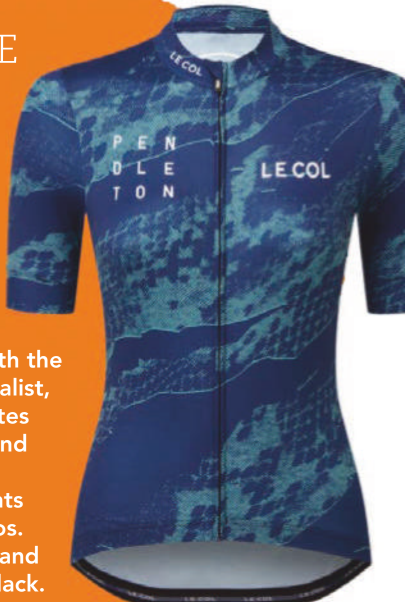
...of Brits will only exercise if their smartwatch can track their session!*

RELIEVE SORE MUSCLES

Heat therapy can be a great pain reliever. Enter new **Hyperice Venom 2** products (from £159, hyperice.com), heat and vibration massage wearables designed with HyperHeat technology and three levels of vibration frequency and temperatures. These therapies work by distributing heat and distinct vibration patterns to relieve soreness, stiff muscles and knots, and boost flexibility and range of motion. Choose from the Venom 2 Back, Venom 2 Shoulder, Venom 2 Leg or the travel-size Venom Go device.

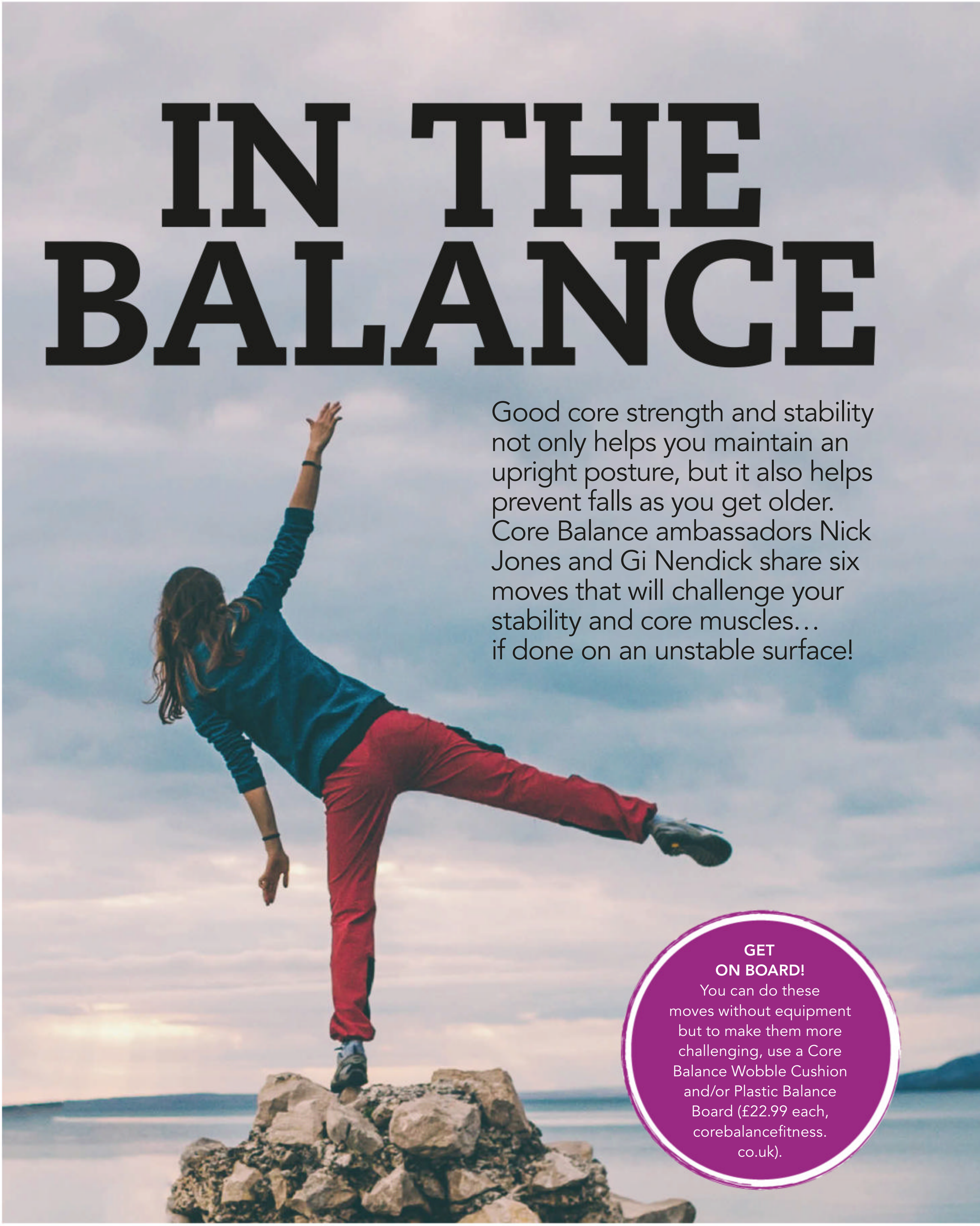
CYCLE IN STYLE

Pedal like a pro wearing the new **Le Col by Victoria Pendleton** collection of short- and long-sleeve jerseys, plus accessories including socks, caps and snoods (from £17, lecol.cc). Created in collaboration with the former Olympic gold medalist, the collection incorporates Victoria's unique style and aesthetics, including snakeskin-like elements that echo her tattoos. Available in black and navy, or just black.



TOP Santé

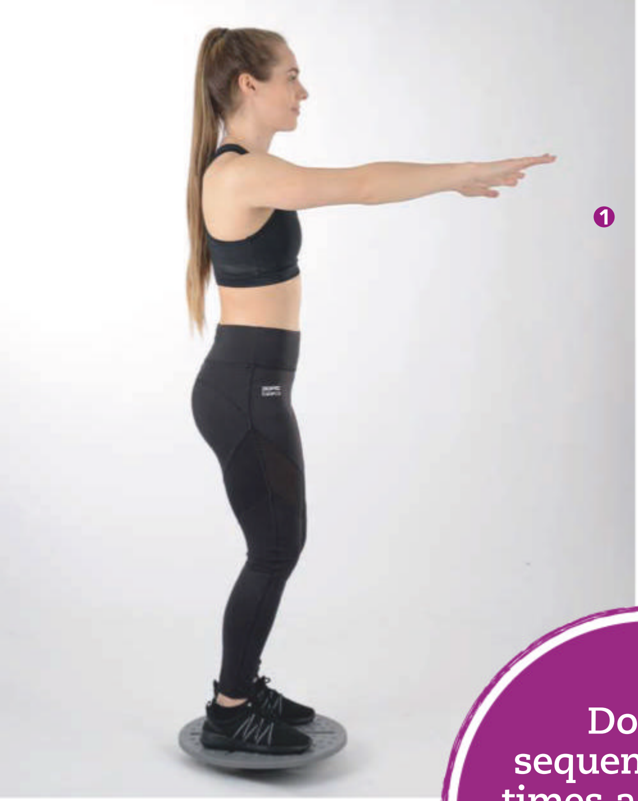
Follow us at instagram.com/ topsanteUK for daily inspiration!



IN THE BALANCE

Good core strength and stability not only helps you maintain an upright posture, but it also helps prevent falls as you get older. Core Balance ambassadors Nick Jones and Gi Nendick share six moves that will challenge your stability and core muscles… if done on an unstable surface!

GET ON BOARD!
You can do these moves without equipment but to make them more challenging, use a Core Balance Wobble Cushion and/or Plastic Balance Board (£22.99 each, corebalancefitness.co.uk).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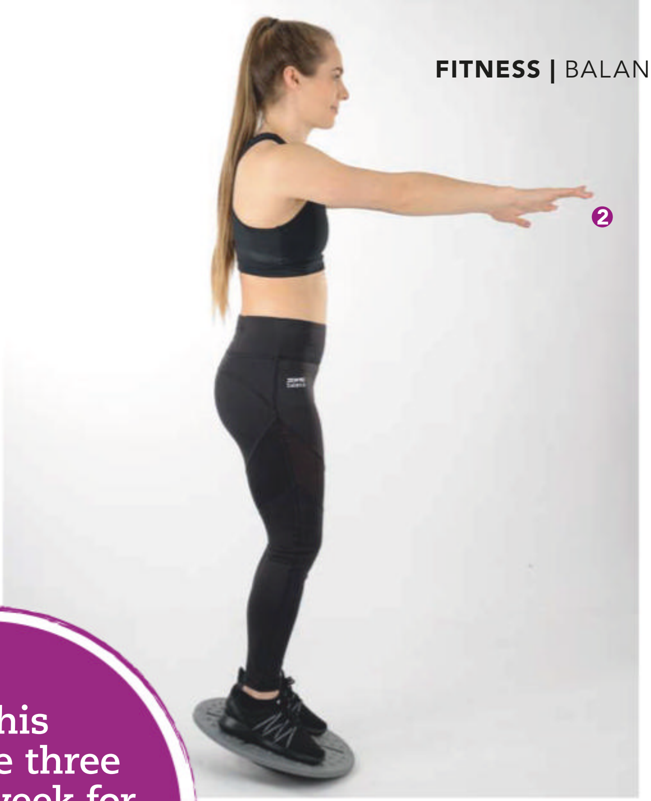
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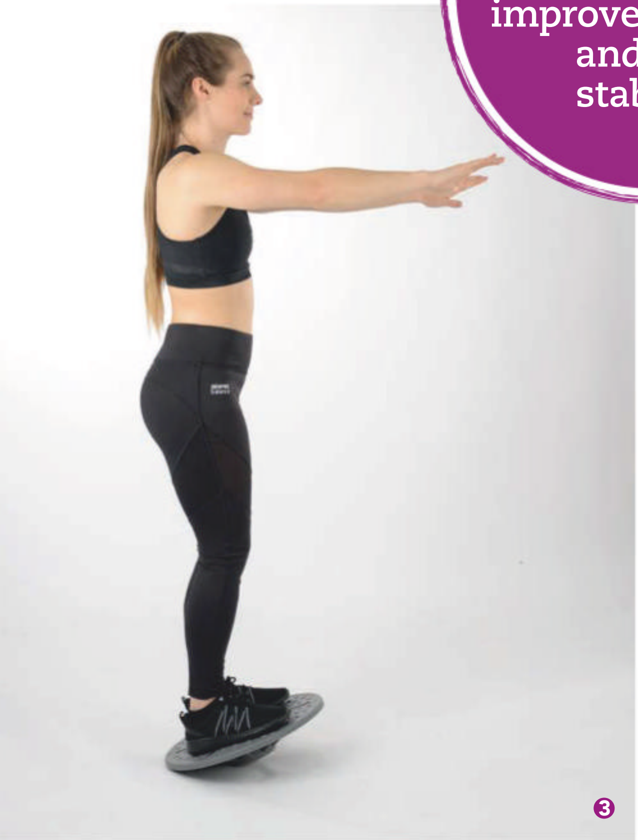
Do this sequence three times a week for improved balance and core stability.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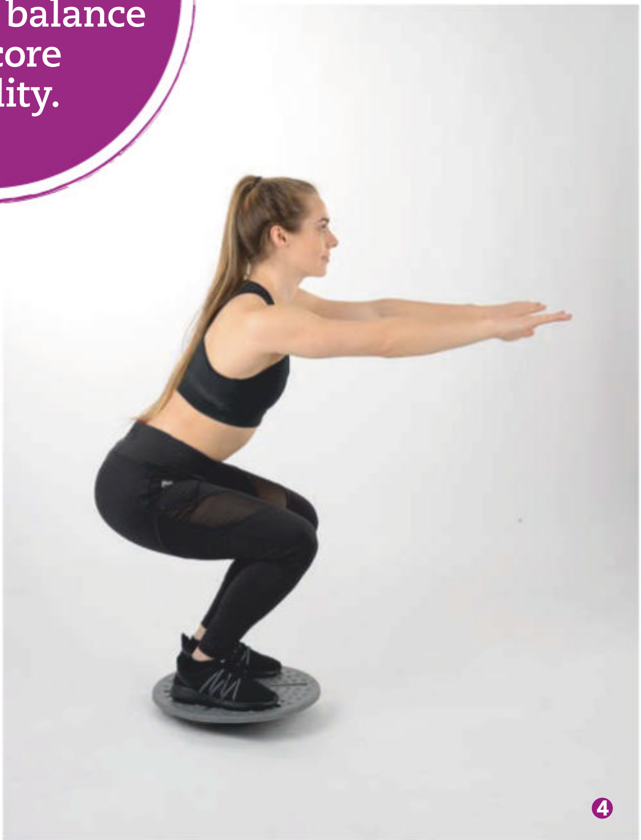
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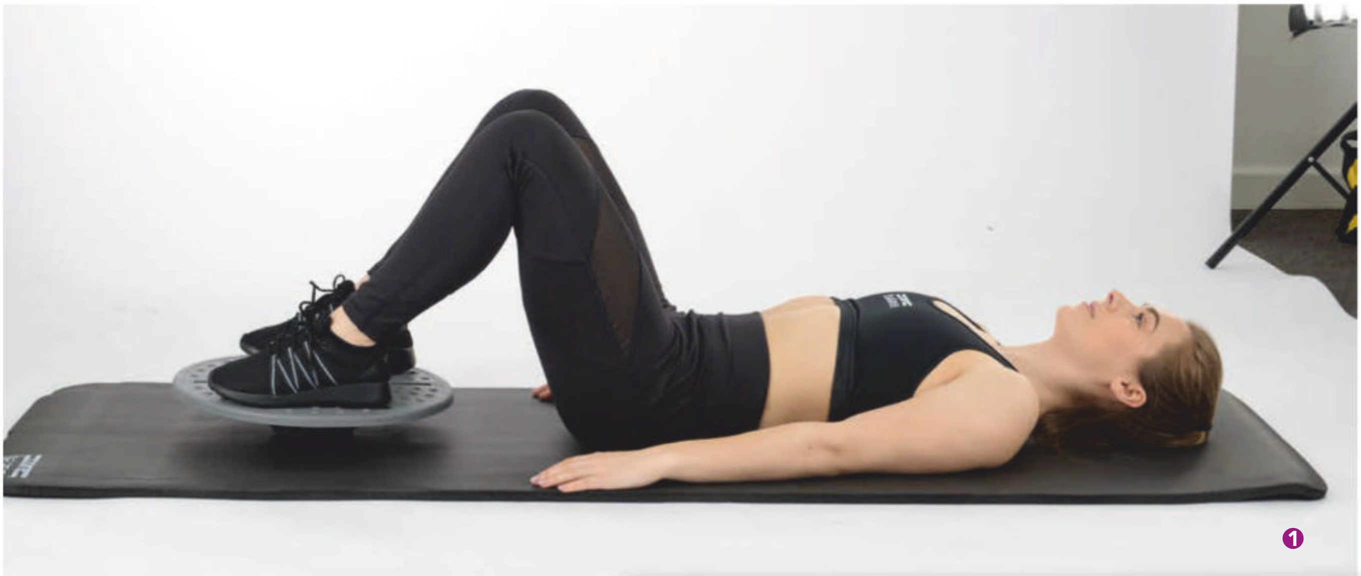
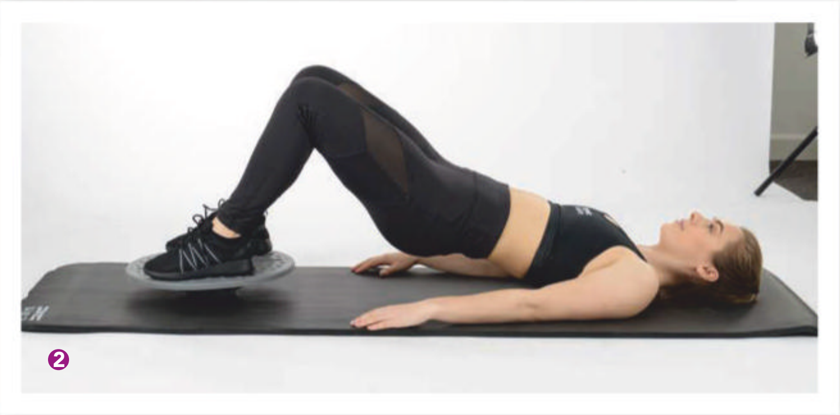
SQUAT ROCKER

This move is like a regular squat but more challenging as you're not on a stable surface, meaning your core muscles must work harder.

- Stand on the balance board, with chest up, shoulders back and arms out in front of you at chest height, to help with balance (1).
- Slowly rock your toes forward, maintaining an upright posture (2).
- Then, slowly rock your heels back, staying upright (3).
- Come back to centre, then bend your knees, lowering down into a squat position (4).
- Keep your knees in line with your toes, core engaged.
- Drive through your heels to slowly stand back up.
- Do 10 reps.

WORDS: NICK JONES AND GI NENDICK. IMAGES: CORE BALANCE.





GLUTE BRIDGE

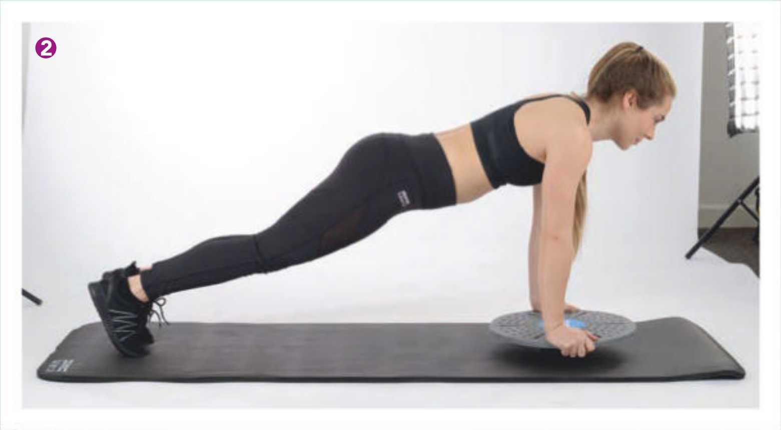
This helps tone your bum while also targeting the smaller side stabiliser muscles in your bum.

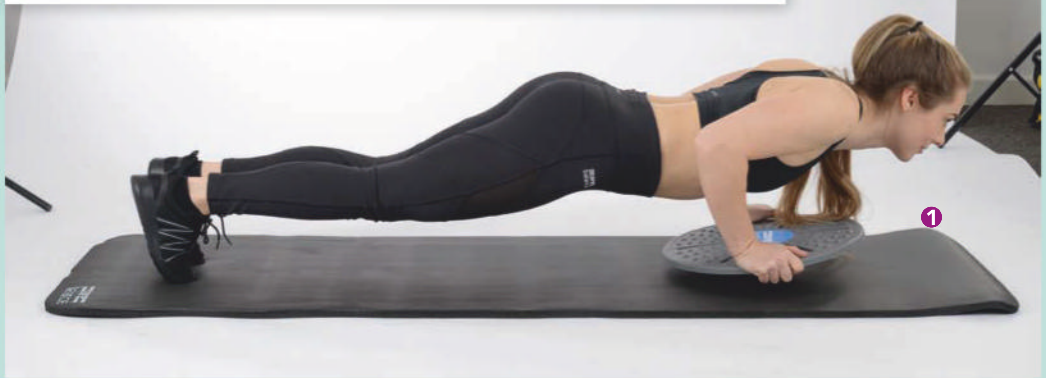
- Lay on your back with your feet on the balance board, arms by your sides (1).
- Push through your feet to bring your hips up and squeeze your glutes for 10 seconds (2).
- Lower your hips slowly down back to the ground, keeping pelvis and core engaged.
- Do 10 reps.

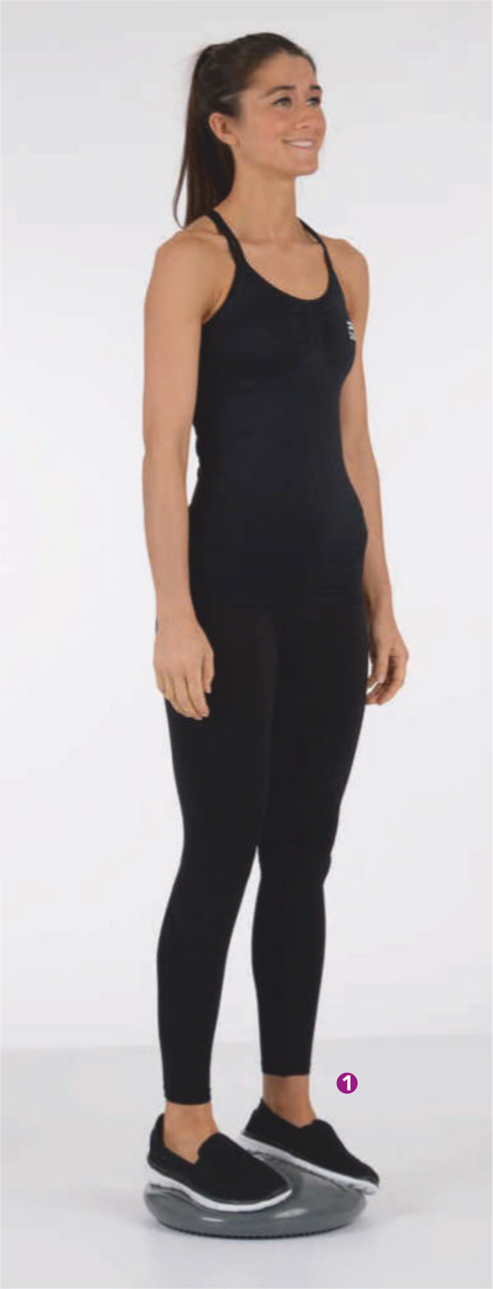
PUSH-UPS

This move works all the stabiliser muscles around your shoulders and in your chest.

- Begin in a press-up position, holding both sides of a balance board. Keep your body in a straight line from heels to head, and with core switched on (1).
- Bend your arms to lower your chest down to the board, keeping your elbows tucked in, pelvis up and glutes engaged to keep your back aligned (2).
- Push back up into starting position.



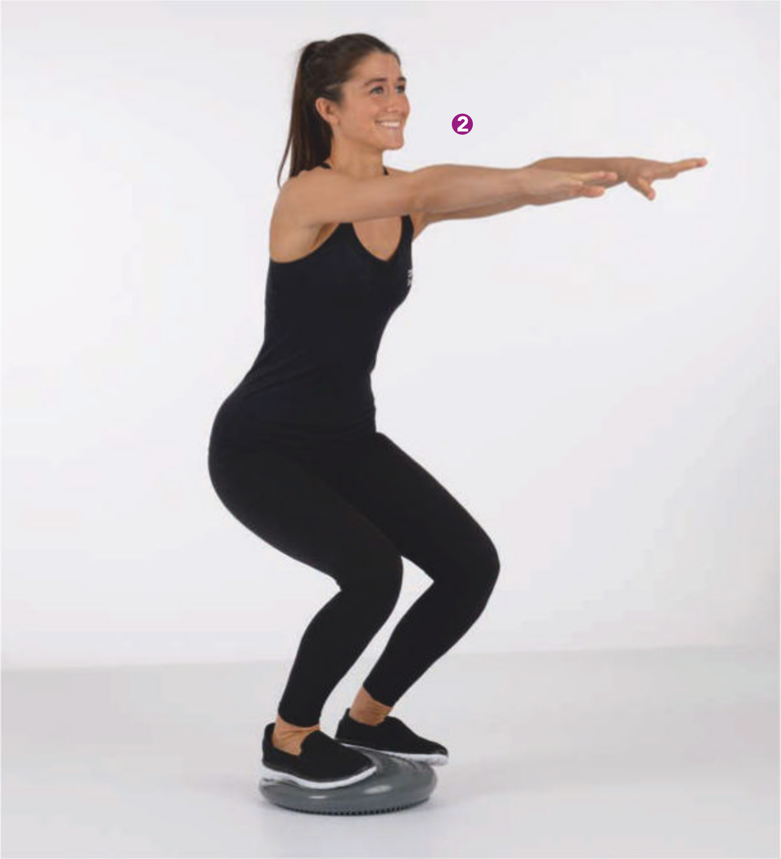


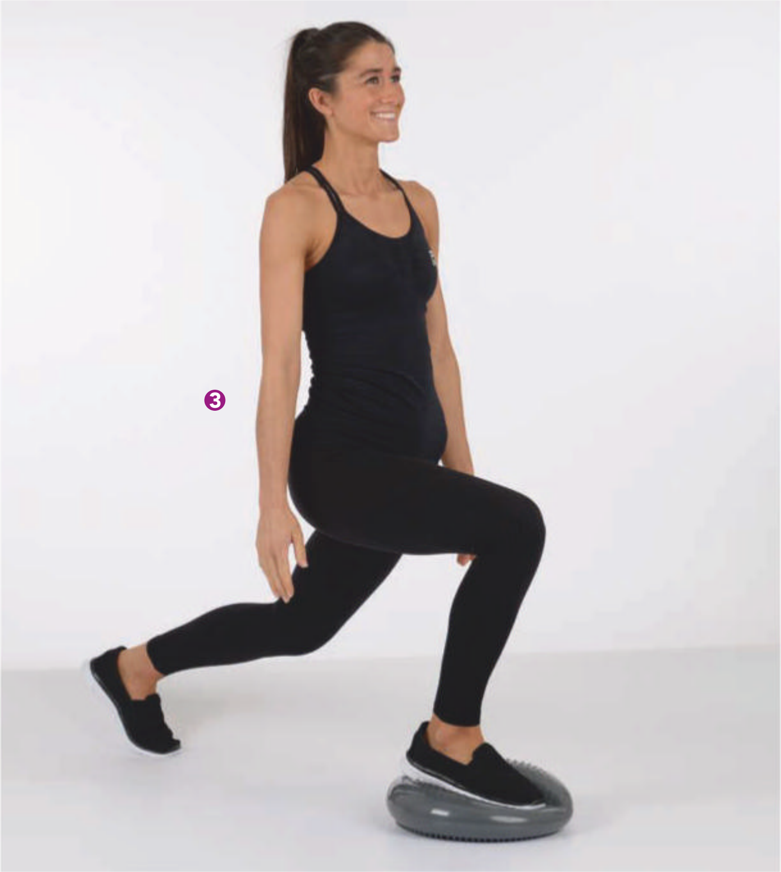


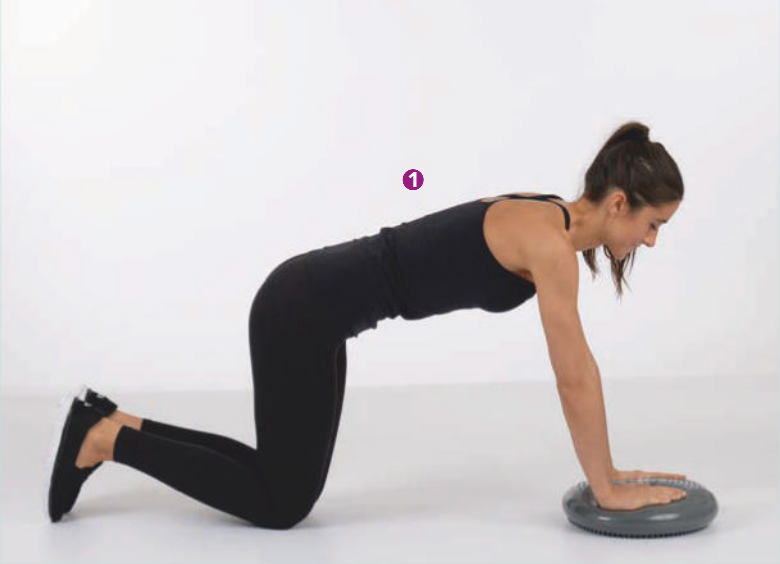
SQUAT INTO REVERSE LUNGE

This really works your thighs and bum as well as your core.

- Begin by standing up tall and balancing on a wobble cushion (1).
- Slowly hinge at your knees and hips, lowering into a squat position (option to have hands out to help with balance, 2).
- Step one leg back, bending front knee to a 90-degree angle, and dropping back knee as low as possible (3).
- Bring it back into a squat position on the cushion, then stand back up straight.
- Do 10 on each leg.



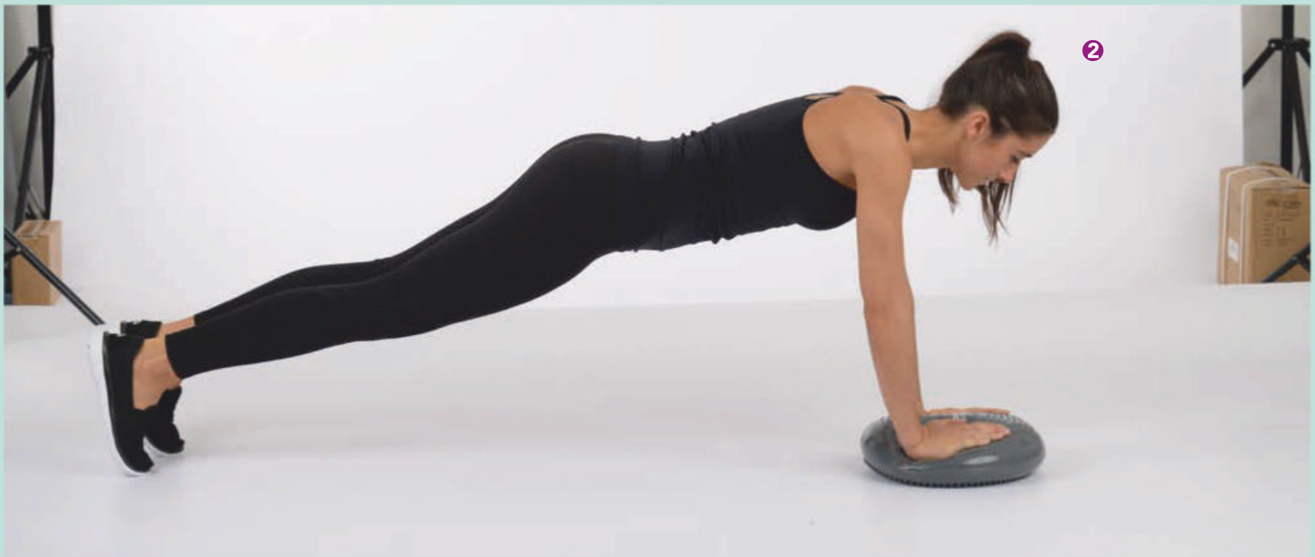


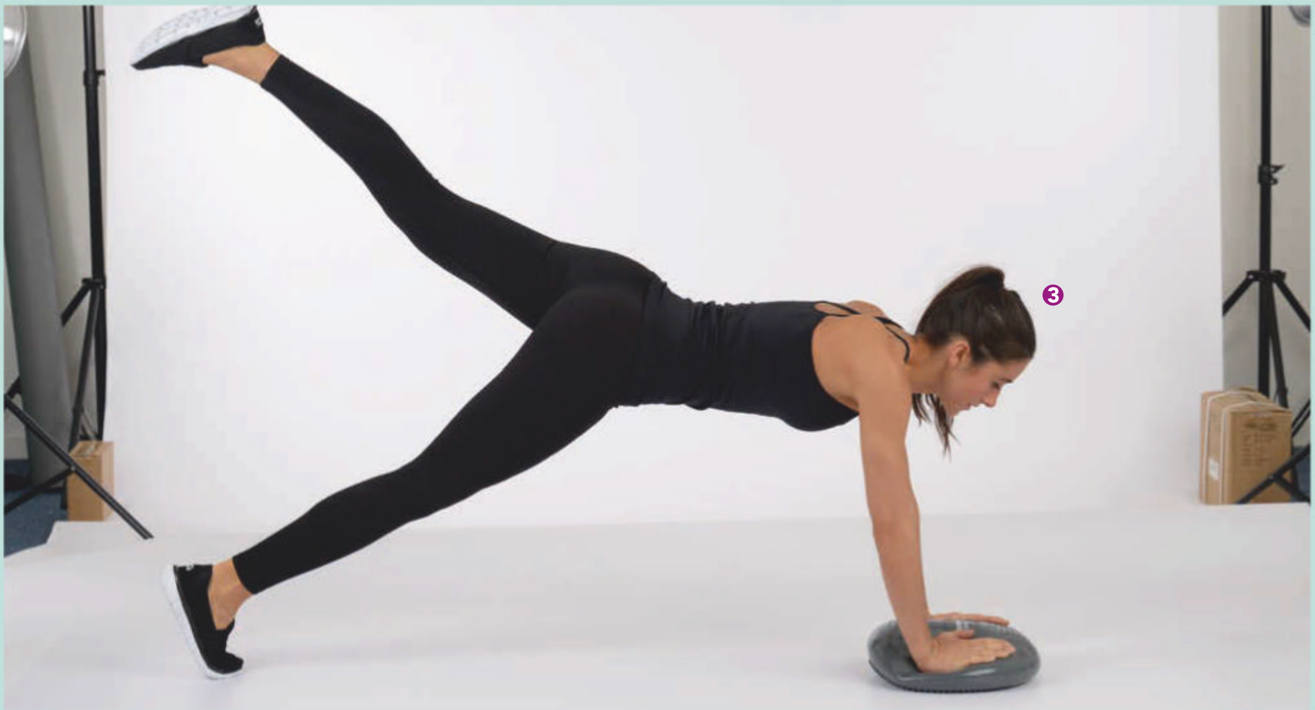


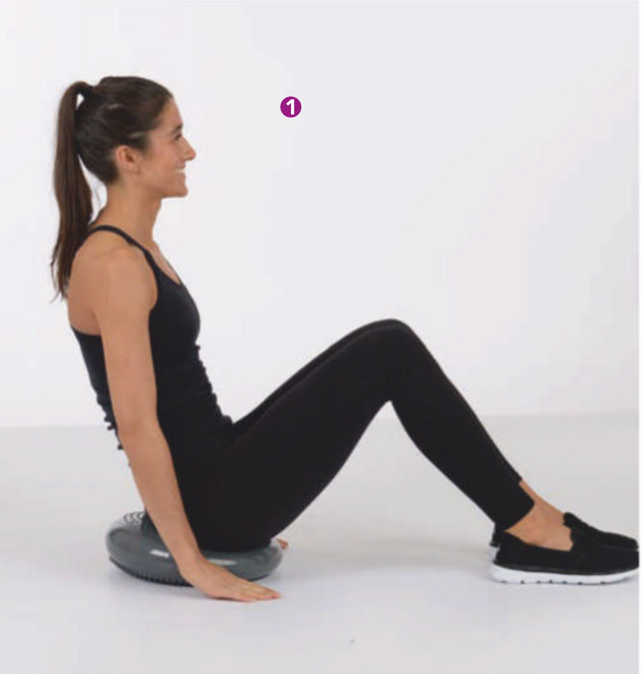
PLANK HIGH-KICK

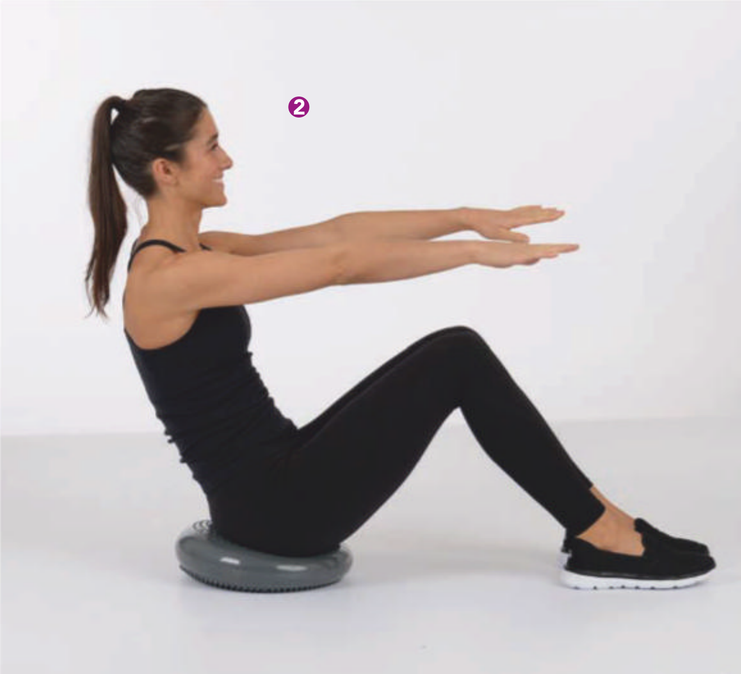
Planks are the ultimate move for a strong core – and doing them on an uneven surface gives your stomach and arms even more of a workout!

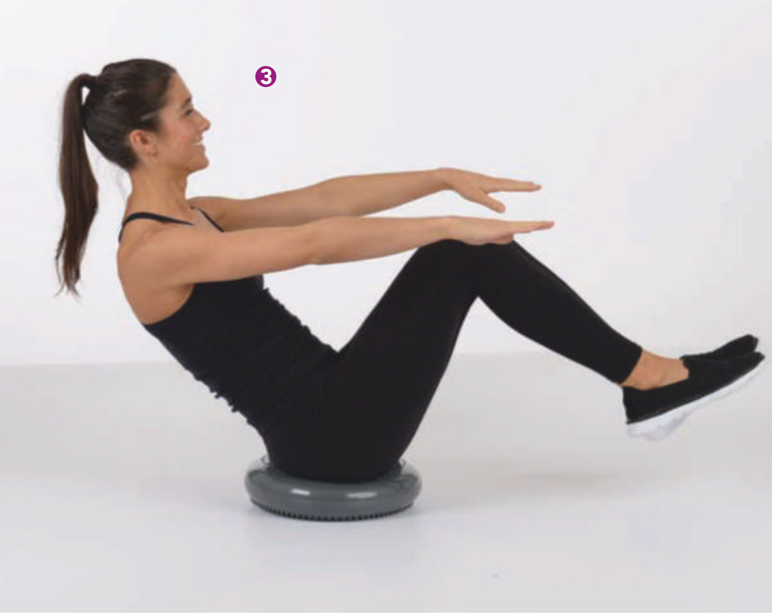
- Start on all-fours with your hands on the wobble cushion (1).
- Jump your feet back into plank position (2).
- Keeping your core tight, slowly raise one leg up behind you (3).
- Lower that leg back down and repeat with the other leg.
- Do 10 on each leg, alternating.

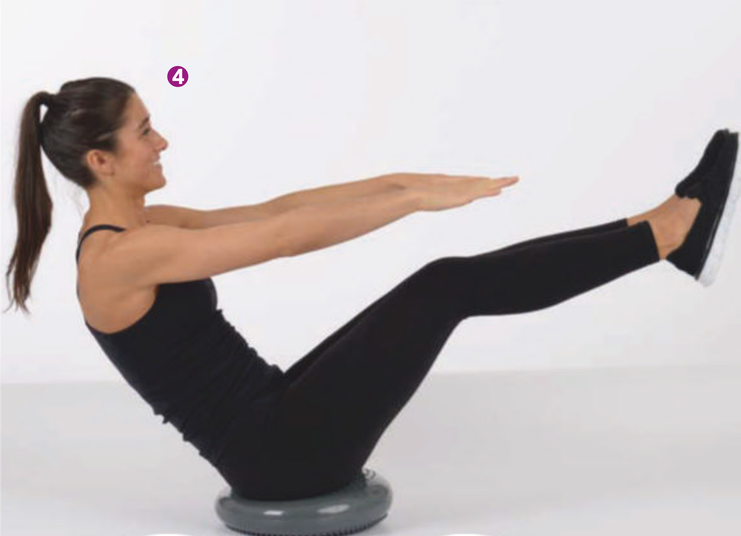












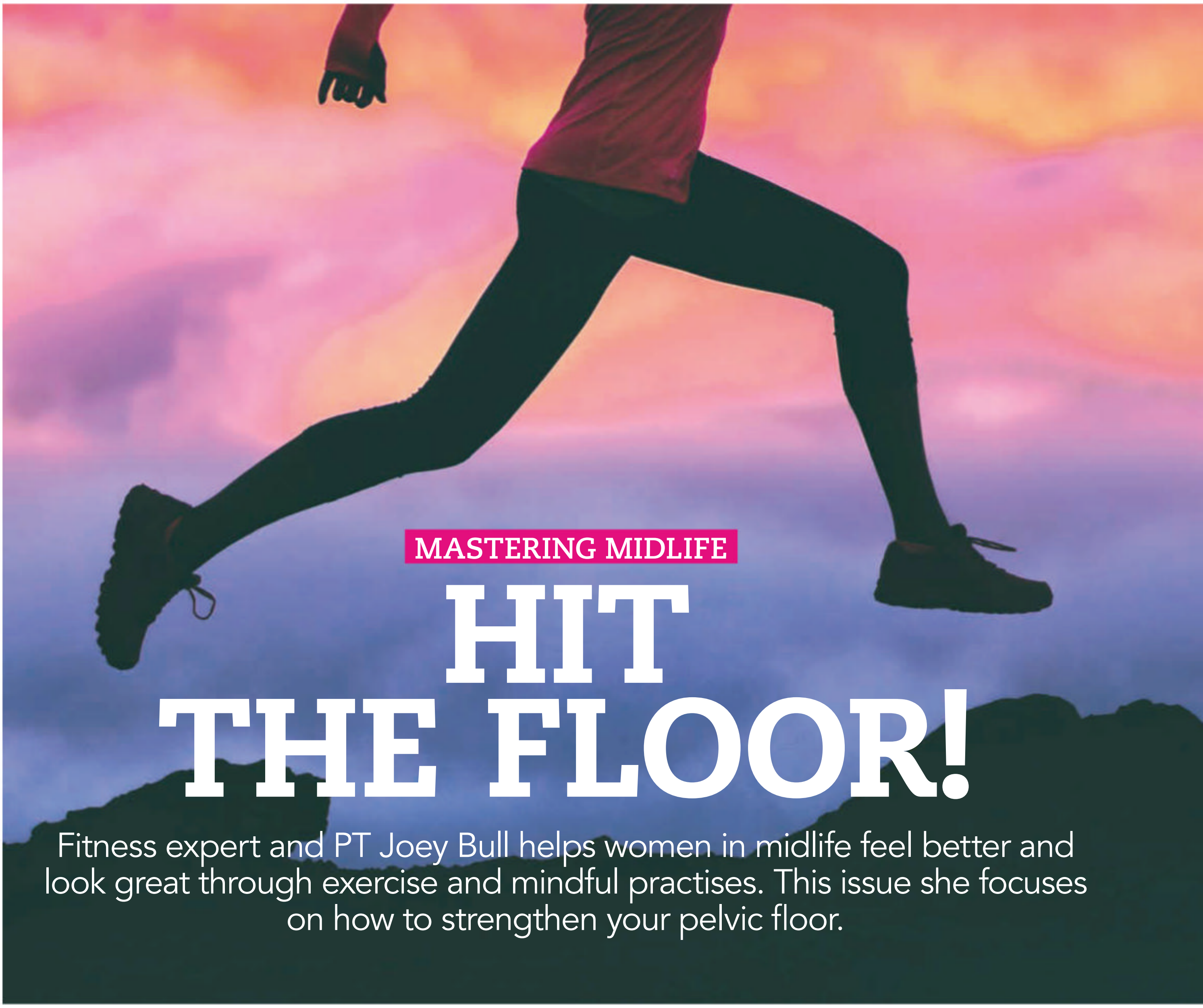
V-SIT HOLD

This is a tough move that requires good core strength. If you can't hold your legs out straight, start with them bent slightly at the knees.

- Sit on the board with knees bent, feet flat on the floor (1).
- Tilt backward slightly and bring your arms up and out in front of you (2).
- Now tilt back further so your feet come off the floor and your body and thighs form a 'V' shape (3).
- If you can, straighten your legs, keeping your body in the same position, holding for as long as possible (4).
- You only need do this once but try extending the length of time you hold, each time you do the exercise.

Nick Jones is a PT based in Newton Abbot and Torquay, Devon, where he runs Apex Fitness, specialising in functional, group and sport-based fitness. He's also a rugby, and hockey coach.

Passionate about helping others feel great about themselves, PT Gi Nendick runs Gi Fitness Training in Newton Abbot, offering one-to-one and group sessions that make fitness fun and accessible.



MASTERING MIDLIFE

HIT THE FLOOR!

Fitness expert and PT Joey Bull helps women in midlife feel better and look great through exercise and mindful practises. This issue she focuses on how to strengthen your pelvic floor.

THE FEMALE PELVIS is nothing short of a miracle. How its tissues are designed to be elastic enough to expand to the size of a basketball to hold a baby, then retain enough muscle strength to deliver that baby and, not least, return to normal after six weeks, is an engineering marvel. Even the mucus that promotes self-cleansing, permits sexual activity and repels infection, is something only nature could create.

During our fertile years and pregnancy, your intimate area has the fastest-healing tissue in the body. But come menopause, this area might not feel like such a great feat of engineering. Low-grade infection and inflammation in the urethra and/or incontinence can be reoccurring issues. The latter is noticeable when coughing, laughing or lifting, which is caused by intra-abdominal pressure.

No antibiotic will stop these irritations from returning as hormones are out of balance and bacteria have a better survival rate due to reduced levels of mucus. Other reasons for these discomforts can be:

- Weakened pelvic ligaments and muscles causing the bladder to slacken and the urethra to be distorted, allowing leakage.
- Having had difficult births.
- Vaginal cells become weaker from reduced oestrogen levels.
- Dietary habits and food sensitivities – caffeine can be a culprit for some, and other foods such as too much sugar can encourage an overgrowth of bacteria or yeasts.
- The contraction of the bladder and/or sphincter may not be in harmony and elimination isn't completed.

Ways you can reduce some of these issues are:

- Pelvic floor exercises (see my examples, right).
- Support weakened tissues by supplementing with testosterone.
- Maintaining good pelvic hygiene for yourself and your partner.
- Trying an intra-vaginal estriol cream.

WORDS AND WORKOUT IMAGES: JOEY BULL.
IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK, DARREN THAT CAMERA MAN.

JOEY'S 3 KEY MOVES

It's important to keep pelvic floor exercises diverse – not just lying down but also standing and adding movement. These exercises can be done daily to reinforce ligament and tissue, and to strengthen the pelvic region in general.

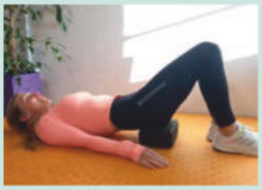
FROG LEGS

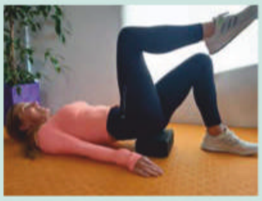
1 Lie on your back and raise your pelvis slightly with a block, folded towel or rolled up mat; this helps the internal areas relax thereby reducing intra-abdominal pressure, allowing you to focus on the specific area of the "bikini triangle".

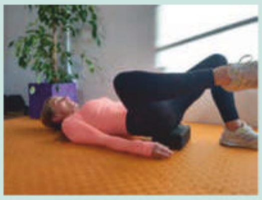
2 Bend both knees, keeping your feet on the floor. Lift one knee, allowing it to open to the side in a frog-like position

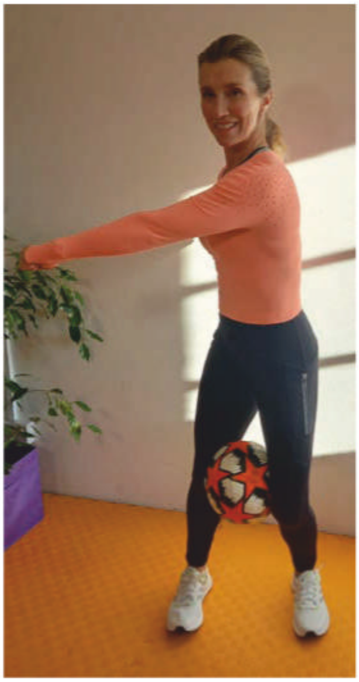
3 Return to start and repeat on the other side.

4 Do this four times in all.









SQUEEZE THE BALL

1 Standing upright, place a towel or a soft ball between your knees, keeping an awareness of the gentle contraction in your pelvic floor area.

2 Now, try other actions such as rotating and bending. Move in different directions and planes, keeping the ball between your knees.

3 Try four rounds of 15 seconds each, focusing on holding the ball tight and keeping an awareness of your pelvic floor at all times.

BREATHING WELL

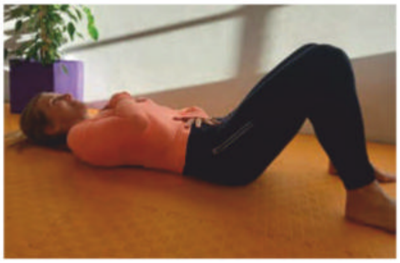
Your core is made up of more than strong pelvic floor muscles – it also includes the multifidus around the lower back, the transversus abdominis wrapping deep around the front of the pelvis in the lower abdomen, and the respiratory system. When these get out of balance there can be a variety of niggles, including urine leakage. This can occur when you create tension in the body and aren't breathing out, for instance doing jumps or squats, or laughing, etc. This exercise should help:

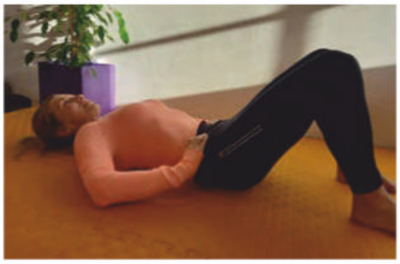
1 With one hand on your chest and the other on your belly, breath in filling your chest and belly, then out while drawing the belly button into the spine. Do this a few times, breathing in and out through the nose.

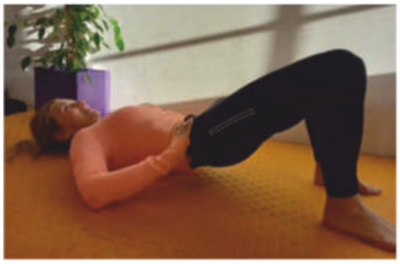
2 Place your hands either side of your hip bones and do the same breathing pattern, focusing on your pelvic floor – the urethra and anus – contracting them as if trying to stop farting or weeing! Keep repeating the sequence.

3 After a couple of minutes of this, add a bridge move by lifting your hips off the floor as you exhale, still focusing on the pelvic floor. Inhale to lower your hips. Do 5 reps.

NOTE: Avoid tensing and straining. This is inner work, so you won't see much going on from the outside.







Joey's fitness and wellbeing course, The Best is Yet to Come, helps revitalise women in their middle years for all-round physical and emotional health. Visit joeybull.com and find Joey on instagram.com/joeybull_fitness.

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TOP BEAUTY

Delve into our pick of the best new buys for skin, nails, hair and lips!

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IR CLINICAL™
Thickening Shampoo
WITH REJUVENIQE®
REDUCE HAIR LOSS*
Shampooing épaississant
AVEC REJUVENIQE®
RÉDUIT LA CHUTE DE CHEVEUX*
237 ml ℮ 8 fl. oz.
MONAT
IR CLINICAL™
Thickening Conditioner
WITH REJUVENIQE®
REDUCE HAIR LOSS*
Après-shampooing épaississant
AVEC REJUVENIQE®
RÉDUIT LA CHUTE DE CHEVEUX*
178 ml ℮ 6 fl. oz.
MONAT
IR CLINICAL™
Hair Thinning Defense
SCALP SERUM
Soin pour cheveux amincissants
SÉRUM POUR LE CUIR CHEVELU
50 ml ℮ 1.7 fl. oz.

THE SCIENCE OF THICKER HAIR

Fight hair loss with science-led technology from the **Monat IR Clinical Collection** (from £43, monatglobal.com/uk). Boost hair density and reduce breakage with the Hair Thinning Defense Scalp Serum (£73), which penetrates the scalp with melatonin and caffeine to reduce production of hair-thinning androgen DHT, as well as strengthening and thickening with biomimetic peptide Capixyl and D-biotin for fuller-looking hair in 60 days, according to a trial. Also try the Thickening Shampoo (£43) and Thickening Conditioner (£49).

WORDS: AMELIE DAWSON.

STRONG + STABLE

HARD AS NAILS

Transform dry, brittle nails with **Mii Cosmetics Strong + Stable Base Coat** (from £13, miicosmetics.com). This regenerating treatment strengthens and helps repair soft, flaking and thin nails. It contains healing pistacia resin oil, encouraging your nails' firmness and strength. Apply as a base coat beneath nail colour or wear alone as a hardening treatment with a lovely glossy finish.

Too cool for skin school?

Refresh and revive your complexion with new **Seoulista Beauty Super Serums** (£22, seoulistabeauty.com) and Cryo Cool Skin Tool (£25). Each Super Serum is highly concentrated to target dryness, dullness and sensitivity. Hydration (£22) deeply moisturises with multi-dimensional hyaluronic acids to penetrate deeply; Brightening (£22) contains niacinamide for clarity and bisabolol for pigmentation; while Calming (£22) combines regenerative Centella asiatica with witch hazel for anti-inflammatory relief. Apply them with the cryotherapy applicator to de-puff skin and boost circulation. Slot the serum nozzle into the tool and massage your face for a healthy glow.

Seoulista BEAUTY
HYDRATION SUPER SERUM
CALMING SUPER SERUM
BRIGHTENING SUPER SERUM
SEOULISTA BEAUTY
CRYO COOL SKIN TOOL

RESTORE YOUR DEFENCES

If the chilly weather is giving you dry, flaky cheeks or chin, restore your skin's natural defences with **Scientia Ceramide Skin Rescue Moisture Barrier Balm** (£28, scientiabeauty.com). Its barrier-boosting ceramides, hyaluronic acid, fatty acids and lipids help restore and lock in moisture. Plus, jojoba, aloe, baobab and watermelon help plump, soothe and nourish – take that winter weather!

Scientia
CERAMIDE SKIN RESCUE
moisture barrier balm
baume barrière d'humidité
protect, restore & rebuild
65ml℮ 2.1US Fl.Oz

TopSanté PROMOTION

MAKE TIME TO RELAX

If you're feeling overwhelmed now that we are into 2023, try the **SOiL Relax Remedy Roller** (£4.70, soilorganics.co.uk), which contains a synergistic blend of comforting clary sage and warming marjoram, as well as lavender and chamomile organic essential oils to calm the nervous system and promote tranquillity. The roller can easily be applied to your pressure points, making it ideal for times when you're feeling anxious, stressed or suffering tension headaches.

SOiL
ORGANIC REMEDY ROLLER
RELAX

with love cosmetics
LIQUID
LIQUID
MULTI CHROME
Pigment
CHAMELEON
Ombre à paupières liquide
VEGAN friendly

LUXE LOOKS A swipe of iridescent **With Love Cosmetics Liquid Multi Chrome Eyeshadows** (£9.95, withlovecosmetics.co) is all you need for a showstopping look. The lightweight, hydrating formula has a metallic finish that appears different in varying lights and angles. It's PETA-certified cruelty-free, vegan and is available in nine colour-shifting shades. It has a silky texture with no creasing or cracking that's perfect for a sophisticated shimmer – great for date night!

LIPS THAT LAST

Fed up with your lipstick sliding off onto your coffee cup or chin? Try a long-lasting lip stain that will stay put, even when you eat and drink. **Tropic Skincare Lip Stain** (£14, tropicskincare.com) gives you a wash of colour that's smudge-proof. Plus, it moisturises and hydrates with hyaluronic acid, passionfruit oil and sweet orange oil. Delicious! Available in Bitten Red (pictured), and Pink Bloom for everyday wear.

GO FOR A BLOWOUT

Pump up the volume of your hair with **JVN Blowout Styling Milk** (from £12, spacenk.com), a styling cream that adds bounce and body to your tresses as you blow dry at home. Hair looks noticeably thicker and more luscious without being weighed down. It contains break-through ingredient hemisqualane, which has a low molecular weight to penetrate hair strands and moisturise intensively. It also has ionic peptides to protect hair from heat damage.

JVN
COMPLETE
BLOWOUT STYLING MILK
LAIT COIFFANT POUR LE SÉCHAGE
90 mL/3 FL OZ

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Your expert guide to WINTER SKIN

Cold temperatures can exacerbate some skin conditions. We look at how to recognise and treat them, so your skin stays smooth until spring!

WORDS: ALISON HARDINGE. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

ARE YOU AWARE OF the impact cold and windy weather has on your skin? Winter brings with it a range of skin conditions that can appear or be exacerbated. But it's not only conditions outside that are to blame. 'You need to consider all environments, internal and external, and the impact of these on your skin,' says Dr Unnati Desai, a GP with an interest in dermatology at Nuffield Health (nuffieldhealth.com).

Outdoors, the air is drier and colder, which can instantly dry out your epidermis. 'We're also often travelling from outdoors to indoors, and the shift in temperature from cold to warm can play a part, but not how you might think,' says Dr Desai.

'Heating, central air conditioning, and heat from fireplaces can all impact skin and dry it out. Ensure your skin is hydrated, both internally and externally.'

Lifestyle habits also have a significant effect. Consuming more alcohol than usual over the festive period may have led to enlarged blood vessels, resulting in flushed cheeks, which can have short- or long-term effects. 'When blood vessels become damaged, it causes permanent redness; in chronic alcoholics, this results in red palms and soles, too. This can also result in larger oil glands and, therefore, larger pores,' says Dr Desai.

WHAT'S YOUR TYPES

Dr Desai describes the four main skin types – which are you?

NORMAL, also called "eudermic", this is considered balanced, not too oily and not too dry, with minimal texture or appearance irregularities.

DRY is lacking oil or sebum and therefore doesn't retain moisture easily and is less elastic.

OILY has an increase in sebum and can often be seen with a "sheen". Excess sebum is often confused as being a result of dry skin. However, this is not always the case.

COMBINATION is not a mix of dry and oily but can be a combination of normal in some areas, with dry and/or oily in other areas. This is sometimes the most difficult to treat as it requires different products for different areas.

It goes without saying too that smoking is bad news for skin and is one of the main causes of premature skin ageing by increasing the breakdown, as well as reducing the production, of collagen. 'It can also add to the development of lines around lips from repetitive tightening of the orbicularis oris muscle, reduced blood supply to skin due to vessel constriction, discolouration caused by tobacco, as well as an increased risk of oral cancers and respiratory diseases,' warns Dr Desai.

SLEEP AND STRESS

Too much partying over Christmas may have led to a lack of sleep, and skimping on shut-eye, in turn, affects your skin. 'When you're sleep-deprived, your amygdala in your brain becomes more reactive. The amygdala handles emotional processing and increased reactivity adds to stress,' says Dr Desai.

Stress causes your body to increase adrenaline and cortisol, which leads to inflammation and reduction in skin firmness. 'Stress also increases sebum production. While sebum is needed, in large amounts it can leave your skin oily, increasing your risk of acne or other skin irritations. Sleep can reduce the body's stress response and avoid these negative beauty effects.'

Psoriasis and eczema can also worsen during winter. Both conditions are exacerbated by dry air indoors and cold outside. If you suffer from either, it's important to use emollients and soap substitutes – as regular soap is drying thanks to its alkaline nature. 'Well-hydrated skin is less likely to flare up, and the greasier the emollient, the better, but for many this doesn't always feel great, so it's best to use a cream in the day and a greasier emollient at night,' suggests Dr Desai.

THE SCIENCE PART

Your skin is the largest organ in your body, and consists of the epidermis, dermis and subcutaneous fat.

EPIDERMIS This is the outer layer of the skin, and cell turnover is around 28 days. 'New cells form at the lower layer of the epidermis and then go through changes as they move up to the outer most layer, where the cells are dead and adhesive, creating a barrier to keep moisture in and infective organisms out,' says Dr Desai. The base of the epidermis contains melanocytes, which create melanin (the pigment that gives skin its colour), and also protects you DNA.

DERMIS This is the middle and thickest layer of your skin. 'It contains the blood supply, nerve endings, hair follicles, sweat glands and oil-producing glands, providing the entire skin with the nutrients needed for optimal function,' says Dr Desai. Collagen, elastin and hyaluronic acid are in this layer, providing elasticity, strength and hydration.

SUBCUTANEOUS FAT This is the deepest layer of skin, and is mostly composed of fatty tissue and connective tissue. 'It contains blood vessels and nerves, but insulates the body from extremes of temperature and provides cushioning to protect the body from injury,' says Dr Desai.

TOP CLEANING TIPS

CLEANSE WELL

Too much showering or hot baths can dry out your skin, removing the protective oils. What you use to wash with is also important. 'Harsh detergents in soap can dry out your skin, leading to constricted blood vessels, which cannot adequately supply nutrients to skin, prolonging the skin's healing process,' says Dr Desai. In winter, go for cleansing balms and oils that help maintain the natural oil content in your skin.

USE A GENTLE TONER

After cleansing, and before moisturising, use a toner to help rebalance your skin's natural acid mantle, which is the fine layer on the surface that protects against bacteria and the elements. 'A non-alcohol toner will help to balance the pH of your skin, while alcohol will strip away oils,' says Dr Desai.

EATING FOR HEALTHY SKIN

A balanced diet helps ensure your body gets all the vitamins it needs to maintain healthy skin. Include the following in food and supplements:

- Vitamin A helps maintain healthy, smooth skin and hair.
- Riboflavin (vitamin B1) helps prevent skin disorders around the nose, lips and mouth.
- Vitamin B6 helps prevent skin disorders and cracks around the mouth.
- Vitamin C helps heal your skin and create its own collagen.
- Vitamin D keeps your skin healthy. It's known as the "sunshine vitamin" as it's manufactured by your skin with the help of sunlight, but only between April and October in the UK, as the sun isn't strong enough over winter.

MOISTURISE WITH CERAMIDES

Look for a moisturiser containing ceramides and hyaluronic acid to attract water into your skin. Some chemicals in certain moisturisers can cause an allergic reaction for those with sensitive skin, so go for natural ingredients where possible.

AVOID PRODUCT CYCLING

Try not to switch from one product to another before your skin has had the chance to see whether one suits it. 'It can take up to three skin cycles (a cycle is four-to-6 weeks) for your skin condition to change, so you need to be patient – at least three months is recommended unless irritation occurs,' says Dr Desai.

8 OF THE BEST BODY OILS

Stay hydrated all over with our pick of cold-weather comforters.

urban veda
natural skincare
Reviving
Body Oil
Shatavari Root +
Rose Flower Oil

Urban Veda Reviving Rose Body Oil (£35, urbanveda.com) supports mature skin and boosts skin suppleness. Apricot, sesame and shatavari (a herb good for women) form a nourishing ayurvedic base, on top of which are rose Damask, rose geranium and jasmine to soften skin.

L'Occitane Shea Fabulous Oil (£30, uk.loccitane.com) softens and moisturises skin, thanks to the shea oil in this non-greasy, delicately scented formula that protects and nourishes parched skin.

HUILE FABULEUSE
CORPS
HUILE DE KARITE
5%
SHEA OIL
100ML
3.3FL.OZ
L'OCCITANE
EN PROVENCE
BODY
FABULOUS OIL

Votary Body Treatment Oil (£55, votary.co.uk) contains a unique blend of macadamia oil and two per cent salicylic acid, making it an excellent choice for dehydrated, dull or discoloured patches on knees, elbows and ankles.

REFINE YOUR SKIN
VOTARY
BODY TREATMENT OIL
MACADAMIA AND SALIC

OUAI
HAIRCARE
ROSE HAIR & BODY OIL
HUILE ROSE CAPILLAIRE & CORPORELLE
3 fl oz/98.9ml ℮

Rub a thin layer of **Ouai Rose Hair & Body Oil** (£26, johnlewis.com) from top to toe after a bath or shower to lock in moisture. The high rosehip and shea oil content will leave winter skin soft with a healthy radiance.

MOROCCANOIL
BODY™
DRY BODY OIL
instant nourishment
HUILE SÈCHE
POUR LE CORPS
nutrition instantanée

The antioxidant-rich blend of argan, olive and avocado oils within **Moroccanoil Dry Body Oil** (£35, next.co.uk) allows the product to soften rough patches, soothe chapped skin and improve texture. The light, weightless consistency sinks in quickly too, making it ideal for a post-shower treat.

REN Atlantic Kelp And Microalgae Anti-Fatigue Toning Body Oil (£38, renskincare.com) is a rich and luxurious body oil that contains replenishing and nourishing Atlantic kelp extracts, microalgae oil and plankton extracts that help leave your skin moisturised, replenished and beautifully soft.

Scented with uplifting notes of frankincense, bergamot, myrrh and jasmine, **de Mamiel Salvation Body Oil** (£95, demamiel.com) is a decadent luxury for weather-worn skin. Apply post-bath and pre-bedtime to let the restorative properties of argan, rosehip and coconut water smooth and soften.

Top Santé Beauty Award-winning **Tea & Tonic Apothecary High Spirits Body Oi**l (£39, teaandtonic.co.uk) hydrates, nourishes and smooths skin while energising and uplifting body and mind. The fast-absorbing dry body oil is rich in vitamins C and E, omega fatty acids, phytosterols and antioxidants.

de Mamiel
botaniques
Salvation Body Oil
200 ml ℮ 6.8 fl.oz

TEA & TONIC
High Spirits
BODY OIL

REN
CLEAN SKINCARE
ATLANTIC KELP AND MICROALGAE ANTI-FATIGUE TONING BODY OIL
HUILE CORPS TONIQUE AUX ALGUES DE L'ATLANTIQUE ET AUX MICRO-ALGUES
CLEAN TO SKIN
CLEAN TO PLANET
100 ml ℮/3.3 fl.oz.U.S.

HYDRATE YOURSELF

'There is a misconception that you need more water in summer than in winter. Even though you sweat in summer, in winter you wear more clothes, which encourages your body to perspire. The human body is anywhere from 55-75 per cent water. It is recommended you drink eight large glasses of water a day,' says Dr Desai.

Women in wellness

"Your life affects your skin"

Natural beauty champion, Poppy Choudhury, 47, founded Poppy's Natural Skincare to pair the power of nature with science by using the most potent plant extracts in her skincare.

DURING MY childhood, I spent a lot of time with family in Bangladesh and I noticed how people there used products found in nature for health and skincare. I had bad eczema as a child, which didn't respond to any of the medication prescribed by doctors in the UK. So, I remember feeling huge relief when, in Bangladesh, a topical paste made from neem leaves was applied to my skin, which stopped the itching and bleeding. My eczema disappeared. That made a big impression on me and sparked my interest in the relationship between science and nature.

FROM THEN TO NOW

The very first formula I made was through necessity. I created a face oil for my very dry complexion to seal in moisture and prevent that parched feeling you get, especially during winter. Over the years, there have been various versions of formulas and, from my current range, I love the Super Age-Defying Organic Face Oil with Bakuchiol & Amla (see box out), which I use as part of a self-care, wind-down routine before bed to help promote relaxation.

It took me many years to formulate the oil, and it contains 31 of the most powerful youth-boosting botanicals. It smells of neroli, which is a wonderfully uplifting, orangey scent, and is also fantastic for the skin. The bakuchiol extract is a plant-based retinol alternative, and the amla berries contain vitamin C and many more skin-beneficial botanicals. The oil also contains co-enzyme Q10, which is a potent antioxidant, and Acmella oleracea, which acts as a plant-based Botox to relax facial muscles and reduce the appearance of fine lines.

> 'It took me many years to formulate the oil, and it contains 31 of the most powerful youth-boosting botanicals.'

PURITY MATTERS

Ingredients matter to me: the purer they are, the more effective. I always find the best ingredients possible. For example, I only use CO2-extracted rosehip oil because that is the most premium method of extraction, ensuring maximum skin-beneficial nutrients are retained. I also use unsaponifiable olive oil, which is the most pure and bioavailable version and is easily absorbed into skin.

Your skin changes as you age, with hormonal shifts from teenage to perimenopause and menopause, as well as with seasonal changes. And it's affected by what's happening in your life. Your skin is the largest organ in your body and yet can be the most neglected, so I want to encourage people to get to know their own skin and have a relationship with it, so they can make informed decisions and not feel pressured to buy the latest trendy products, but what works for them.

POPPY'S 3 SKINCARE TIPS

Improve your complexion with these easy tweaks.

1 **DO THINGS EARLIER** If you usually apply products last thing at night, most of them will end up on your pillow! Instead, do your skincare routine two hours before bed, so you allow products to work their magic before you hit the hay.

2 **SKIP THE MORNING CLEANSE** If you applied skincare the night before, there's no need to wash your face every morning. Your skin will benefit as it will get the chance to repair its natural barrier function and more fully benefit from any skincare you applied before bed.

3 **RELAX TO LOOK RADIANT** Your skin is affected by stress, so take time to relax each day to improve your complexion. If you tend to put everyone and everything first, it's important to do something you love just for you. You'll be happier, which leads to glowing skin, especially if it involves getting outdoors.

POPPY'S
NATURAL SKINCARE
SUPER AGE-DEFYING ORGANIC FACE OIL
BAKUCHIOL & AMLA
POPPY'S
NATURAL SKINCARE
GLOW FACE MASK
THE ULTIMATE SKIN DETOX
Salicylic, Turmeric & Vitamin C
All Skin Types
60g e

TOP OF THE RANGE

Poppy's Natural Skincare Super Age-Defying Face Oil (£75, poppysns.co.uk) is nourishing yet lightweight, and contains botanically active phyto-retinol, which is a powerful treatment against the signs of premature ageing, along with 30 other potent plant ingredients for increased cell turnover for smoother skin. Or, for a pampering treat, try the Glow Face Mask The Ultimate Skin Detox with Salicylic, Turmeric & Vitamin C (£30). The powerhouse blend contains 20 botanically active ingredients, including beta hydroxy acid from natural salicylic acid to dissolve excess sebum and fade acne marks and discolouration. Turmeric helps lighten pigmentation and keeps skin supple, while neem is antibacterial as well as being anti-inflammatory.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. IMAGES: PAULA COLEMAN.

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MIDLIFE MAKE-UP

PUCKER UP!

Can we still rock red lipstick over 40? Of course! It's just a matter of application and formulas. Grace Fodor, founder of Studio10, shares how to master a gorgeous red pout.

1
LITTLE LIP SCRUB
Brown Sugar
TINKER TAYLOR
5g
2
BIOSSANCE
SQUALANE + ROSE VEGAN LIP BALM
3
AGE REVERSE PERFECTING LIPLINER
STUDIO 10
5

1 SMOOTH YOUR POUT

A gentle exfoliator will remove any dead skin and build-up, leaving a smooth and hydrated base for your lip products, and ensuring that the colour stays put and lasts longer. My current favourite is the **Little Lip Scrub by Tinker Taylor** (£12, tinkertaylorbeauty.com). With organic and moisturising ingredients, it eliminates irritation and leaves lips feeling hydrated and smooth.

2 GO FOR A GOOD BALM

It's important to choose a lip balm with a nourishing formula, and my personal recommendation is one that contains hyaluronic acid (HA). **BIOSSANCE Squalane + Rose Vegan Lip Balm** (£12, spacenk.com/uk) contains hero ingredients squalane and hyaluronic acid to ensure long-lasting hydration and create a non-smudge base.

3 ACE YOUR LINER

Using a lip liner is one of the best ways to ensure lipstick stays put and doesn't bleed into fine lines. It can also enhance lip shape, definition and add fullness. The **Studio10 Age Reverse Perfecting Lipliner** (£23, feelunique.com) is a double-ended conditioning "lip-touring" pencil, with a universal shade that mimics the colour of lips whatever your skin tone. It can be used as a base for any lipstick or paired with a neutral colour for a volumised and plumped-up pout.

4 CHOOSE THE RIGHT SHADE

Red lips are timeless, but if you are struggling to make them work for you, you may want to consider the undertones in your skin. For warm undertones, opt for a warmer red lipstick with orange undertones. If you have cooler undertones, blue-toned reds will work better. When in doubt, choose a true red shade, with equal amounts of blue and orange, as it looks good with all skin tones.

5 FIND A FLATTERING, NON-DRYING FORMULA

Mature lips need a moisturising lipstick formula – avoid ones that are too matte as these are drying. Instead, opt for a more wearable, satin finish. The **Studio10 Wake Up & Glow Lip & Cheek Tint in EmpoweRED Poppy** (£24, studio10beauty.com) has a hydrating HA balm at its core, while Pat McGrath Lip Fetish Sheer Colour Balm in Wild Cherry (£30, patmcgrath.com) gives a wash of colour.

WORDS: GRACE FODOR. MAIN IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.

ADVERTISING PROMOTION

Discover how the magnesium range from **BetterYou** can help you sleep better, feel more relaxed and reduce fatigue.

WHY YOU NEED **MAGNESIUM!**

MAGNESIUM IS vital for more than 300 different actions in your body, making it one of the most essential nutrients. It not only keeps your bones healthy but also helps keep fatigue at bay, reduce the effects of stress, and keeps your muscles flexible. You can easily become deficient in magnesium through stress and illness, so it's vital to top up your stores. A magnesium-rich body will be stronger, more resistant to illness, more flexible and better able to resist both physical and emotional stress.

TIME TO REST

Life can be busy but by not giving your body time to rest and recover, any stress can start to take its toll, from aching and tense muscles to a weakened immune response and difficulty sleeping. BetterYou has a wide range of topical magnesium products from sprays and lotions to bath flakes, which provide fast and effective remineralisation – the magnesium is quickly absorbed and reaches your blood and muscles in minutes, bypassing the digestive tract where many nutrients, including magnesium, can be poorly absorbed.

WHY BETTERYOU?

Traditional tablets and capsules don't suit everyone; not only can they be difficult to swallow for some, but they require digestion, which can be slow and suboptimal. BetterYou's award-winning, pill-free oral sprays and topical magnesium supplements – developed in conjunction with doctors, biochemists and nutritionists. All products in the range are also free from palm oil and palm oil derivatives, and the bottles are made from 100 per cent planet-friendly plastics.

"THEY WORK FOR ME!"

I first used BetterYou Magnesium Bath Flakes (£4.95, betteryou.com) and Magnesium Body Lotion (£11.95) last year after completing the Yorkshire 3 Peaks and National 3 Peaks Challenge. Even though I exercise regularly, my muscles were very sore. The salts helped soothe my muscles and speed recovery, as did the lotion. As a busy mum of two, working full time and going to the gym 4-5 times a week, I've found huge benefit from these products and now can't live without them!'

Beverley Rudd, 52, Wakefield.

Magnesium Muscle
Magnesium Sleep
Magnesium Flakes
Magnesium Mind
Magnesium Relax
Magnesium Revive

TOP FOOD & DRINK

Enjoy the best new foods and treats, plus get recipe inspiration from a new family cookbook.

SHOW YOUR GUT SOME LOVE!

Enjoy the immune-supportive benefits of gut-friendly bacteria in the tangy form of new **Vadasz Pineapple and Turmeric Sauerkraut** (£4.75, waitrose.com). Adding a lively taste and texture to brighten up almost any meal, the condiment is made with a traditional fermentation process and is unpasteurised to retain the gut-protective live cultures. It's also rich in fibre and vitamin C.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. PHOTOGRAPHS: VADASZDELI.CO.UK.

ADD A DASHI OF FLAVOUR!

For livening up stews and stir-fries, Kayanoya Dashi Stocks (from £5.99, japancentre.com) is just the ticket – now on sale in the food hall of the Japan Centre in London, as well as online. Choose from vegetable, kombu kelp, mushroom, prawn and blended vegetable. Sprinkle the stock powder directly onto your cooking or mix with water to make a stock for soups and sauces.

NEW FOOD READ

Anna's Family Kitchen, Navigating Through Food, Faff and Family Life, by Anna Stanford (£25, Meze Publishing), is a family-friendly cookbook with nutritious, minimal-fuss recipes by a self-taught home cook. You'll find more than 70 recipes, divided into sections of Light Bites & Snacks, Quick & Easy Weekdays, Weekends & Gatherings, and Fakeaways. Plus, there's a Cook Clever chapter with hints and tips to save money and reduce waste.

Anna's
family kitchen
NAVIGATING THROUGH FOOD, FAFF & FAMILY LIFE

HAND BLENDED
TEA & TONIC
ADAPTOGEN SUPERHERB COMPLEX
Inviting Sleep
GOLDEN MILK WELLNESS TEA
High Spirits
WHITE MINT WELLNESS TEA

A CUP OF CHILL

Enjoy a revitalising cup of calm delivered to your door with the newly launched **Tea & Tonic Wellness Tea Subscription** (from £10.80, teaandtonic.co.uk). The luxury tea blends contain adaptogenic herbs to help balance stress and support a healthy immune system. Choose from loose leaf or pyramid bags, with all packaging biodegradable and compostable. We love the Ginger Turmeric Tonic Wellness Tea with ashwagandha and gotu kola to revive and fortify. Subscriptions come with free UK shipping.

GET ON BOARD

Slice and dice cheese and fruit hygienically with **TOG The Mouse Cheeseboards** (£100, togknives.com), made with naturally antimicrobial beech or walnut wood. The 36cm x 22cm x 4cm boards are made by hand in Yorkshire in small batches. They are designed with raised feet for stylish presentation and so it's easy to pick them up. Boards are finished with mineral oil and TOG board balm (£16) to maintain a water-resistant and supple finish.

SNACK HAPPY

If you can't get through the day without an extra nibble, swap crisps and biscuits for healthy snack boxes from **Treat Trunk** (from £19.99, treattrunk.co.uk). Snacks include dark chocolate, dried fruit, nuts, energy balls and even popped lotus seeds as an alternative to popcorn. Brands change every month, so you don't get bored, and items are low sugar and vegan. Allergies are accommodated. Sample a one-off box or subscribe.

INSANE grain
GATO
BRAVE
Cheeky P's
WELL RULY CRUNCH
PINEAPPLE

SO JAMMY!

Show your love with this cute heart-shaped jar of Tracklements Fresh Chilli Jam (£6.55, tracklements.co.uk). Created especially for Valentine's Day, the sticky-sweet jam smoulders with a gentle heat from fistfuls of fresh red chillies – ideal to liven up numerous dishes.

Tracklements
fresh chilli jam

YOUR KETO KITCHEN

FASTING FOR FOCUS, FAT LOSS AND ENERGY!

Functional nutritionist, author and keto expert Pauline Cox MSc explains how you can kickstart ketone production with fasting for increased energy, weight loss and improved mood.

12
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WORDS: PAULINE COX. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK, SUZI BIRD (PORTRAIT) & KATYAKOZARYCONTENTCREATION.COM (RECIPE).

IF YOU'RE FEELING A BIT lacklustre in body and mind at this time of year, fasting may not seem like the obvious choice to help you but it can uplift your energy levels. Fasting offers a multitude of benefits, including increased energy, focus, mental clarity, mood and sleep. Meanwhile, inflammation is reduced, blood sugar stabilised, lean muscle mass preserved, metabolism increased and your appetite regulated.

Fasting puts you into a state of ketosis, which is good for your brain. Although your brain makes up just two per cent of your body weight, it demands about 23 per cent of your energy expenditure. The majority of fuel for the brain comes in the form of glucose, the bioproduct of carbohydrate breakdown. However, ketones are an alternative energy source, produced by your body when you fast or eat a very low-carb diet.

BURN FAT FOR FUEL

When glucose is absent, your body turns to its own reserves of fat to burn as a source of fuel, resulting in ketones. However, to access the stored fat for fuel, glucose and insulin levels must be lowered. This is where the magic of fasting comes into play. When you fast, your body accesses stored glucose within your liver, called glycogen, and uses this for fuel. About 900 calories of glycogen are stored in your liver, which takes approximately 14 hours of fasting to use up. After that time, your body can use stored fat to burn for energy.

Burning fat for fuel produces ketones, which are used in place of glucose to produce ATP, your body's currency of energy. Ketones are a highly effective source of fuel, producing more energy pound for pound than glucose. Ketones produce fewer free radicals in cells during energy production, giving them a reputation for being anti-ageing. Ketones also have antioxidant properties, donating electrons to unstable free radicals. Ketones circulate in the blood, passing though the blood-brain barrier to fuel brain cells. This especially benefits those with insulin resistance, a condition that can arise from over-consumption of sugar and results in a glucose deficit in brain cells. Poor cognitive function, poor memory, lack of focus and low mood can set in if brain cells cannot use glucose for fuel.

BETTER FOR YOUR BRAIN

Brain cells use glucose on demand, meaning they pull in what's needed. However, if there's reduced ability for brain cells to use glucose, cellular activity declines, resulting in underactive brain cells and even cell death. This glucose deficit caused by insulin resistance has been linked to common conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome, type 2 diabetes, pre-diabetes and the ageing brain. Brain fog, memory impairment, inability to focus, low mood and anxiety can result from the reduced supply of fuel to the brain cells.

Ketones do not have the same on-demand function in the brain as glucose. Ketones are pushed into brain cells, as opposed to being pulled in when needed. Higher circulating ketones levels mean higher levels of fuel provided for your brain.

Ketones are also the preferred source of fuel for your brain; if both glucose and ketones are present, the brain will go for ketones. They have also been shown to reduce cravings, normalise appetite and increase metabolic rate. Fasting can increase circulating ketone levels through increased fat burning, giving you a tool for weight management and supporting a healthy metabolic rate. ▶

> 'Higher circulating ketones levels mean higher levels of fuel provided for your brain.'

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **FASTING**

Try these tips to begin your fast and trigger ketone production.

1 Target your hunger hormone

Your hunger hormones are trained to peak at meal times. Ghrelin, a powerful hunger hormone that drives appetite, will peak to match the times of day when you usually eat. If you snack frequently, you will have peaks in ghrelin very often. To reduce constant hunger pangs, reduce your grazing habit. Ghrelin peaks can be shifted by about 45 minutes per day. If you usually have dinner at 8pm, move back to 7.15pm, then to 6.30pm – you ideally want to finish eating by 7pm so your overnight fast will last long enough.

2 Start with an overnight fast

Stop eating at 7pm, with no snacking or alcohol intake. Break your fast at 9am the next day to create a 14-hour fasting window. This supports fat burning and increases your ketone levels.

3 Supplement with electrolytes

You lose water when insulin levels lower as a result of fasting, which can have beneficial effects on blood pressure and bloating. But it's possible to lose electrolytes such as sodium, magnesium, potassium and calcium during a fast. These can be replenished through adding a little sea salt to water or using an electrolyte supplement.

4 Go low-carb for breakfast

To help keep ketones circulating and encourage fat burning, reduce your sugar intake and consume healthy fats first thing, such as coconut milk and coconut oil. Coconut is a rich source of a special group of fats called MCTs, which are converted by the liver into ketones. Add MCT oil to your daily routine to support ketone production. MCT is a natural laxative so start with a small amount!

TRY IT: Get CocoFina Organic MCT Oil for £7.95 (usually £9.95) using code BurnFat at sowandarrow.com. Offer ends Feb 28, 2023.

CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE FASTING IF YOU ARE DIABETIC, PRE-DIABETIC, TAKING INSULIN OR ANY DIABETES MEDICATION OR ARE PRONE TO LOW BLOOD SUGAR.

Cranberries are a rich source of vitamin C, proanthocyanins to support urinary tract health, and quercetin, which is a potent antioxidant with anti-inflammatory properties.

CRANBERRY & COCONUT CHIA PUDDING

Cranberries should be a superfood all year round – not just for Christmas! Due to their sharp flavour, the berries are rarely eaten fresh, however, they are bursting with goodness and can be helpful for women's health. Why not try them in powder form? Cranberry powder is made from the skin of the berries and contains many beneficial compounds. I like Arctic Power Berries (from £5.99, sowandarrow.com), which offer a range of powdered berries including cranberry, blackcurrant, lingonberry, sea buckthorn and blueberry. Add a scoop to a smoothie or chia pudding.

Serves: 2

- 6 tbsp chia seeds
- 235ml almond milk
- 1 tbsp collagen powder (optional)
- 1-2 tbsp honey
- Handful of organic raspberries
- 2 tsp Arctic Power Berries Cranberry, heaped (alternatively, use cacao)
- 1 tbsp desiccated coconut, heaped
- 2 tbsp coconut or Greek yoghurt

1 In a bowl, add the chia seeds, almond milk, collagen (if using) and honey, and combine together.
2 Mash in the raspberries, then stir through the berry powder (or cacao) and desiccated coconut.
3 Adjust any sweetness to taste and set aside in the fridge for an hour or overnight to thicken.
4 Serve with a dollop of coconut yoghurt or Greek yoghurt, some extra fresh fruit, another sprinkle of berry powder, and enjoy!

To learn more about optimising fat-burning and metabolic health, join Pauline's Facebook group: Healthy Keto & Low Carb Community.

WOK ON!

Cook up a spicy meal for yourself and friends, or a loved one this Valentine's Day, with these super quick, easy, and healthy dishes from chef and author Ching-He Huang.

HOT SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

SERVES: 2

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 2.5cm piece fresh root ginger, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
- 2 medium red chillies, deseeded and sliced
- 250g boneless chicken thighs, sliced into 1cm x 2.5cm strips
- 1 tbsp Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry
- 250g spiralised courgettes
- Sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds, to garnish

For the sauce

- 50ml mirin
- 1 tsp chilli bean paste
- 2 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp runny honey

1 Whisk together all the ingredients for the sauce in a bowl, then set aside.
2 Heat a wok over a high heat until smoking and add the rapeseed oil. Add the garlic, ginger and chillies and toss for a few secs to release their aroma.
3 Add the chicken and let it settle for 15 secs to sear, then flip it over and cook for 1 min. As it starts to brown, add the Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry and cook for a further 2 mins until the chicken is cooked through.
4 Pour in the sauce and stir-fry until the sauce has reduced and is thick and glossy.
5 Divide the spiralised courgettes between two plates, arrange the chicken on top, sprinkle over the toasted sesame seeds for a nutty garnish and serve immediately.

SPICY OYSTER SAUCE SQUID WITH GREEN PEPPERS

WORDS: CHING-HE HUANG. IMAGES: TAMIN JONES.

SERVES: 2

- 🟩 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 🟩 1 medium white onion, halved and cut into slices
- 🟩 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 🟩 200g whole baby squid, sliced into rings
- 🟩 1 tbsp Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry
- 🟩 1 green pepper, deseeded and sliced into 1cm cubes
- 🟩 1 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce
- 🟩 1 tsp oyster sauce
- 🟩 ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 🟩 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 🟩 Pinch of caster sugar

1 Heat a wok over a high heat until smoking and add the rapeseed oil. Add the onion and toss for 20 secs until seared, softened and beginning to brown at the edges.

2 Add the chilli and baby squid and toss for 10 secs, then season with the Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry.

3 Add the green pepper and toss for 1 minute. Drizzle a tablespoon of cold water in around the edge of the wok to create steam to help cook the pepper.

4 Cook for another minute, then season with the light soy sauce, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce, lemon juice and sugar and serve immediately.

KUNG PO TOFU

SERVES: 2

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp Sichuan peppercorns
- 3 whole dried chillies
- 200g fried tofu, cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 tbsp Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry
- 1 small red pepper, deseeded and chopped into small chunks
- Handful of dry roasted peanuts or cashew nuts
- 2 spring onions, sliced on the diagonal

For the sauce

- 100ml cold vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1 tbsp Chinkiang black rice vinegar or balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp sriracha chilli sauce or good chilli sauce
- 1 tbsp cornflour

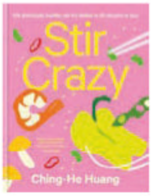
1 Whisk together all the ingredients for the sauce in a small jug, then set aside.
2 Heat a wok over a high heat until smoking and add the rapeseed oil. Add the Sichuan peppercorns and dried chillies and stir-fry for a few secs, then add the tofu cubes and stir-fry for 1 minute until the tofu is seared at the edges.
3 Add the Shaohsing rice wine or dry sherry, then the red pepper and cook for just under 30 secs.
4 Give the sauce a quick stir, then pour into the wok and bring to the boil. When the sauce has reduced and is thicker and slightly sticky, add the peanuts or cashew nuts, followed by the spring onions, and cook for a further minute.
5 Stir to mix everything together well, then transfer to a serving plate and serve immediately.

CHINESE WOK-FRIED SPICY SPRING ONION SALSA VERDE WITH KALE AND EGG NOODLES

SERVES: 2

- 120g curly kale, sliced
- 200g dried egg noodles
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- Pinch of sea salt flakes
- Knob of fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced at an angle
- Pinch of dried chilli flakes
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 50ml cold vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp low-sodium light soy sauce

1 Pour 1 litre cold water into a pan and bring to the boil.
2 Add the kale and blanch for 3-5 secs, then drain and set aside.
3 Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, then run them under the cold tap, drain and drizzle with the toasted sesame oil.
4 Heat a wok over a high heat until smoking and add the rapeseed oil. Add the salt and let it dissolve in the hot oil, then add the ginger, fresh chilli, dried chilli, and spring onions in quick succession to explode their flavours in the wok.
5 Add the vegetable stock and stir-fry on a medium heat for 30 secs. Add the kale and cooked egg noodles and toss all the ingredients together to warm through.
6 Season with the light soy sauce, toss, then transfer to serving plates and eat immediately.



Stir Crazy: 100 Delicious Healthy Stir-Fry Dishes in 30 Minutes or Less, by Ching-He Huang (£22, Kyle Books) is out now.

ASK THE EXPERTS

We love hearing from you. If you have a question for any of our experts, please email it to **topsante.talkback@kelsey.co.uk.**

MIND EXPERT

Katy Georgiou is a psychotherapist. Her new book *Your Mind Matters: How to Talk About Your Mental Health* (£12.99, Vie Books) is out February 9.

Q I'm a 50-year-old woman and I've started to feel irrationally angry over small setbacks. Not about anything important but silly little details. Could this be related to menopause? And what can I do to reduce the anger?

A If you're perimenopausal or have recently reached menopause (a full year after having no periods), then this may certainly be part of the wider context to consider. The key is less about why it's happening and more how it shows up: how do you experience the anger physically in your body? Do you shout, cry, use insults, berate yourself? Reflect on this. Also, start noticing patterns – does time of day, sleep, hunger or who's around you affect it? Consider your wider life: are there stresses at work or home triggering your anger? Stress isn't always obvious; life transitions, even exciting ones, can affect you. Perimenopause could be a part of that.

Think of your anger as a helpful clue and as opposed to something "wrong" that needs fixing. Sometimes, awareness is all you need for change. A helpful exercise can be to imagine your anger as a dog. What sort of dog is it? How does it approach you or strangers? Does it bark, bite or jump? Does it want attention or space? Take it for a walk in your mind, get to know it. Does it try to run off the leash, or does it respond to you talking to it?

Q I'm feeling overwhelmed with the responsibility of caring for my elderly parents as well as functioning professionally and at home. I've started having occasional panic attacks. How can I calm down during an attack?

A During a panic attack, think about grounding yourself. Place your feet flat on the floor or sit on the ground, if possible. Focus on your senses. For example, take a deep breath in and name what you smell. Also, look around the room and name five things you can see, three things you can hear and something you can taste. Touch and feel what's around you. The aim of this is to get you out of thinking and into your body.

Focus on your breath: imagine pulling your breath up through your feet from the ground, and feel it rising up into your abdomen and upper body to your heart and head. Then, on the outbreath, push it through your arms and picture it leaving through your fingertips back into the room. Keep doing this until you feel calmer. If you have a mirror nearby, go to it and look at your reflection, describe what you see in front of you.

WORDS: ANGELA KENNEDY. IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK.

VASCULAR EXPERT

Mr Parameswaran Sridhar is a vascular surgeon at Stratum Dermatology Clinics (stratumclinics.com).

Q I've noticed lots of varicose veins appearing on the back of my legs. Why is this happening and what can I do?

A Varicose veins are swollen, enlarged veins, often seen in the legs and feet, which appear lumpy, twisted and are usually blue or dark purple in colour. Problems with blood drainage and malfunctioning vein valves cause blood to leak backwards and pool in the veins.

Fluctuating hormone levels in your 40s and 50s during perimenopause and menopause can lead to the rise and drop of oestrogen as well as progesterone, which adds to varicose vein risk. The female hormones make the vein wall more relaxed, hence more blood flows through them than normal, making the valves redundant. This is the same reason why varicose veins are common from early pregnancy and for those taking HRT (I must mention though that getting varicose veins should not stop people from taking HRT as it is often more beneficial to take it than not).

Similarly, some blood pressure tablets can also cause the vein wall to relax, so for those taking some blood pressure medications such as losartan in the perimenopausal period, it can be a double whammy.

The relaxing of the vein wall can also exacerbate or initiate circulatory problems leading to varicose veins.

Staying active is a vital way to prevent varicose veins. Your calf muscles act like a pump when walking and push the blood up out of the legs. If you're sedentary or standing for a long period of time you can get venous insufficiency in the form of swollen ankles.

For minor cases, compression stockings will help as a control measure. For a permanent solution, Stratum Dermatology Clinics offers Endovenous laser treatment to seal the veins with little or no scarring.

HAIR EXPERT

Jonathan Andrew is a top hair stylist (instagram.com/jonathanjandrew) and Fudge Professional haircare ambassador.

Q My naturally curly hair is a frizzy, dry mess with split ends at this chilly time of year. What can I do to tame my curls?

A Frizz is usually caused by a change in weather. When curly hair dries more rapidly, you can be left with a much frizzier finish. So, if you're blow drying your hair quickly because of the colder temperature in the room, this can cause frizz. Naturally curly hair tends to lean more towards the drier side, so conditioning is key. The reason for this is that the natural oils produced by your body don't travel the full length of the hair shaft because of the curls. So, hair can be greasier at the roots and dryer through the ends.

My top tips for taming curls are to try a hair mask as a quick and easy way to rapidly improve the condition, as well as investing in shampoo and conditioner that's specifically designed to support naturally curly hair, such as Fudge Professional Damage Rewind Range (from £13, lookfantastic.com), which contains Opti-PLEX technology to intensively smooth and repair each hair strand. For styling, try softly diffusing the hair to the point of being just dry but avoid too much hot heat on your hair.

Q My long, fine, straight hair has very noticeably thinned. What type of haircut would you recommend to make my hair appear thicker with more volume and movement?

A I see this issue quite a lot in my salon. From a style point of view, the easiest way to deal with thinning hair is to go for a shorter, choppy pixie-like cut to add texture, lift and volume. But going this short isn't for everyone. Alternatively, I'd suggest taking away some length, as longer hair tends to be heavier and consequently flatter. I'd then create a style just below the shoulders with long layering for more lift and volume. This also gives you the option to style hair with waves or soft curls through the sides to increase width for a fuller look.

For styling, get lift into the roots with a product that creates a boost. My go-to product is salt spray, which gives texture and grip to boost volume – I use Fudge Salt Spray (£13.75, lookfantastic.com). Then, massage mousse into your roots for lift and to hold your style in place. A thickening cream is also great for giving your hair a temporary density boost for a high-volume finish.

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KATY PERI *meno pause*

Katy Sunnassee shares her thoughts on perimenopause, and why she's considering going keto again – if only she could stick to it!

I'VE NEVER "GONE ON A diet" as such for January – better to wait for spring for a detox anyway – but I have dabbled with the ketogenic diet a couple of times. My reasons before weren't for weight loss – although most people do lose weight on it – but for energy and brain health reasons. Being on the refined carb rollercoaster of blood sugar highs and lows, which is how I've eaten for most of my life, isn't great as I move into my mid-40s; what I used to easily "burn off" so to speak, now seems to settle as fat on my midriff (I moaned about that in the January issue!). Also, more importantly, the constant ups and downs of blood sugar can leave me lethargic and needing more carbs to get going. I want to escape that trap and have sustained energy throughout the day, as well as to avoid becoming pre-diabetes – if I'm not already there!

Secondly, there's a reason some health professionals call Alzheimer's Type 2 Diabetes. While our brains can and do run on glucose most of the time, turns out they run far better on ketones, according to keto expert Pauline Cox (this issue she writes about fasting – see page 86), which are produced when you eat a high-fat, low-carb diet. Chatting to Pauline about the benefits of keto always inspires me to give it another try, especially if it can not only keep my brain healthy and my energy stable but also help me drop a few kgs.

The problem is, I've never managed to do it long enough to feel the benefits. The first time I tried, three years ago, I ended up gorging on cheese to compensate for the lack of carbs. I'm not normally a cheese eater, and it just felt sickening after a while. I lasted two weeks. I realised afterwards I'd inadvertently gone down more of an Atkins route with all the dairy and meat and probably not had enough green veggies.

About a year later, I tried again follow guidelines from Dr Anna Cabeca's Keto-Green 16 (drannacabeca.com), which focuses on healthy fats, protein and lots of veggies for fibre.

But I still only managed three weeks, largely because you need to be a planner if you want to succeed. I've never, that I can remember, planned a meal in advance. I tend to eat when hungry. Whatever is to hand, I eat, which has often meant carb-heavy snacks. So, to succeed at keto I must a) plan and b) have some low-carb snacks around.

There are tons of "keto" snacks these days and I've tried loads of them, some better than others (beware "no sugar" bars that contain maltitol or sorbitol, both of which convert to sugar in your body!).

My current favourites are Locako Keto Collagen Snack Bars (£35 for 15, locako.co.uk), which are low in carbs and contain grass-fed collagen, plus essentials fats and protein. They also do a Salted Caramel Pancake mix with almond flour (£6.49). And for a Valentine's treat, try Bad Brownies (£21 for box of 16, badbrownie.co.uk), which contain xylitol and erythritol instead of cane sugar, to swerve those blood sugar crashes.

Bon appétit!

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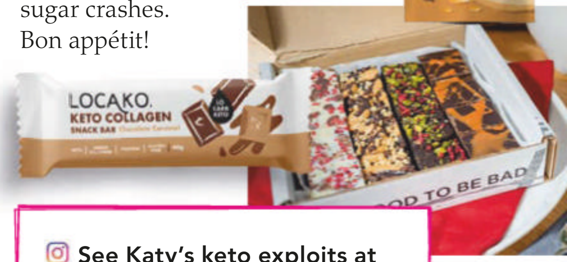

See Katy's keto exploits at instagram.com/thehealtheditor

WORDS: KATY SUNNASSEE. IMAGE: GEORGINA LITTLE PHOTOGRAPHY (@GEORGINALITTLEBRANDPHOTOGRAPHER).

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Try something new for 2023

09:19

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